United Nations A/69/PV.10

General Assembly

Official Records

Sixty-ninth session

10th plenary meeting
Thursday, 25 September 2014, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kutesa ..... (Uganda)

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Address by Al Hadji Yahya Jammeh, President of the Republic of the Gambia

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of the Gambia.

Al Hadji Yahya Jammeh, President of the Republic of the Gambia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Al Hadji Yahya Jammeh, President of the Republic of the Gambia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Jammeh: Thanks be to the almighty Allah for giving me another opportunity to address this global body at a time when human civilization is teetering on the brink of a major catastrophe. Before going further, let me convey our warm felicitations to you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. While wishing you success, I would like to assure you of the support and cooperation of the Gambia during your tenure as President of the Assembly. I would also like to commend your predecessor, Mr. John William Ashe, for his able stewardship as President of the General Assembly.

It is a well-known fact that injustice, iniquities, exclusion and greed all contribute to the creation of international tensions that can lead to catastrophic consequences, conflicts, wars, death and destruction. Today we witness lamentable inertia on the part of the United Nations, as powerful Member States take undue advantage of weaker Members; unjust economic and financial sanctions are imposed on other Member States; others are bullied and their natural resources looted; or wars are waged against still others, simply in the name of democracy, freedom and regime change. All of those actions are based on false pretences.

That is not the scenario that the noble and distinguished gentlemen, the founders of the United Nations and its Charter, envisaged. What those great founding fathers of the United Nations intended over half a century ago was a world body committed to promoting the principles and ideals of peace and security and advancing the causes of justice and equality; freedom for all; and respect for the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of States, rich or poor, black or white, big or small; and respect for the social, spiritual, religious and cultural values of all peoples. Therefore, in order to uphold the founding principles of the Charter of the United Nations, Member States must avoid the promotion of all forms of aggression, confrontation and dangerous tension by exercising maximal restraint in the pursuit of their individual or collective national interests at the expense of others. In fact, the pursuit of one's interest at the expense of the legitimate interests and security of others is criminal.

Invariably, when major tensions erupt into conflicts or wars, the world economy as a whole suffers, with major disruptions or reversals in the developing countries. That has been evident in the wake of past

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506. Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

14-54847 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

regional or international conflicts, when oil prices, for example, surged, with the developing countries bearing the brunt of the debilitating consequences. In short, the United Nations must be seen not as a prejudicial but rather as an all-embracing global body that stands for the interests of not only the few and the powerful but all its Member States.

The Gambia acknowledges with satisfaction the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want" (resolution 66/288, annex), and the resulting establishment of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals and associated consultative forums, including the African regional consultations on the sustainable development goals. While the Gambia appreciates the proposals of the Open Working Group on the post-2015 development framework, it is hoped that the goals and targets outlined thus far will reflect an integrated and transformative agenda that would ultimately build upon the gains made from the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in order to fully address the many difficult challenges that we face today.

It is in that connection that we welcome the choice of the theme for this session, namely, "Delivering on and implementing a transformative post-2015 development agenda". That theme is indeed pertinent and timely, as it gives fresh impetus to our ardent desire to identify a set of global priorities to steer the international development agenda, once the MDGs expire at the end of 2015. However, in launching that new initiative for transformative change, we must not allow novelty to mask any shortcomings of the MDGs experiment. There is a need to take stock of the achievements and failures of those Goals and indeed to renew support to those developing countries, particularly the least developed, landlocked and island developing countries, that may still have difficulties in meeting their critical MDG targets before the end of 2015.

At a time when the world is facing multiple and complex challenges, there is a need to pay attention to the commanding role that the United Nations should be playing in advancing international peace and security, justice and the fundamental rights and freedoms of all peoples. The attainment of the post-2015 sustainable development goals will be elusive, unless the United Nations begins to execute its core mandate in earnest and exercises its commanding role in dealing with the host of local and international crises that are disruptive to development. A few current issues stand out on which the United Nations has yet to be seen to be playing a leading role.

First, there is Ebola, a deadly haemorrhagic fever that has claimed more than 2,000 lives in West Africa, mostly in the severely affected countries of the Republics of Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia. The World Health Organization has warned that, if no major efforts are made immediately, more lives will be lost and the economies of those countries will come under serious strain. Already, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have projected that, owing to disruptions in the labour force and productive sectors of the economies of those countries, declines in their respective economic growths could range from 1.5 to 3.5 percentage points, if current conditions remain unchecked.

For those affected countries, all development efforts are now on hold as they grapple with that contagious and deadly disease. It is encouraging that the United States Government has committed, rather belatedly, some funds and military assets to curb the spread of that disease. That gesture is more than just humanitarian aid. It is also, as President Obama said, in the national security interest of the United States. That is true because in a globalized, interconnected world, infectious diseases can easily spread to any part of the world. It is for that reason that the United Nations should take the lead in mobilizing international support to fight Ebola, which is an evident danger not only to West Africa but to the world at large. On that note, we want to thank the Russian Federation for being one of the first major Powers to respond to the outbreak of deadly Ebola by providing scientific and medical teams to some of those countries as soon as the outbreak was announced.

Secondly, for some time now, the world has been witnessing the bloodiest and most heinous form of terrorism, unleashed by satanic and sadistic human vermin disguised as Islamic militants, who are acting ostensibly in the name of Islamic purity. In reality, those sons of infamy and their shameless and deceitful claims of devotion to the peaceful and noble religion of Islam are, in fact, an insult not only to all true Muslims, but to our Prophet and humankind in general.

Before the emergence of the mujahideen in Iran and later in Afghanistan in the 1980s, which was a movement subsequently associated with Islamic terrorism by the Western mainstream media in total disregard for

its creation and sponsorship by the Western Powers to fight proxy wars against the Islamic revolution in Iran and the Soviets in Afghanistan, there existed no Islamic terrorism. Islam in its entire history has never been associated with violence or terrorism, as those activities are *haram*, or forbidden, for a Muslim. Islam is a religion of peace and tolerance and has nothing to do with the activities of those anti-Islamic bands of dangerous criminals, who spread nothing but deep-seated hatred for human life and whose sole intention is to desecrate and defame Islam.

Consequently, those various treacherous hate groups cannot be associated with Islam, as our Islamic religion is pure and unique and cannot therefore be classified into varying degrees such as moderate Islam, democratic Islam, extreme Islam or violent Islam. Simply put, Islam is a pure religion that encourages the best of human behaviour and interpersonal relationships, among other virtues, as prescribed by Allah, the almighty creator. In other words, the adherents of those lunatic fringe groups of bandits and gangsters, such as Boko Haram, the Islamic State in Syria and Al-Qaida, are dangerous criminals and enemies of human civilization and development and should therefore be wiped off the face of the Earth, because we do not need them.

Thirdly, the situation in the Middle East remains highly volatile, and the United Nations has been watching the cycle of violence in the region rather helplessly. In the most recent conflict between the Palestinians and Israelis, approximately 2,000 people from Gaza, mostly women and children, died at the hands of the Israeli army, and approximately 70 Israelis, all of them soldiers except for three children, lost their lives. The continuing expansion of Israeli settlements on Palestinian land, despite repeated calls for restraint by the international community, is unacceptable, as it undermines any prospects for a two-State solution. The United States Government has played a very strategic and useful mediating role in the past, but the United Nations must now take up its commanding role in seeking a peaceful settlement that is just, durable and acceptable to all the Members of the United Nations.

Fourthly, as part of its core mandate in promoting global peace and security and greater understanding among peoples of different backgrounds and cultures, the United Nations must do more to advocate a culture of peace, tolerance and understanding, not only among the world's great religions but also among Member States themselves. That is important, as we continue to witness a growing propagation of disinformation and misrepresentation, especially by the Western media, about Islam in general and the application of sharia law, particularly in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia is the birthplace of Islam, and sharia is the legal system in Islam and the only divine Constitution for not only the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia but all Islamic States. Therefore, the incessant criticisms and misrepresentations of the application of sharia law in Saudi Arabia or anywhere else are disrespectful and abhorrent. It is an insult to all true Muslims to describe sharia law as barbaric. As a matter of fact, the most barbaric laws are those that are not based on any divine teachings. Sharia is the legal system that the almighty Allah has prescribed for all Muslims, and we will apply it to the letter.

In the same vein, the General Assembly should be commended for the designation, two years ago, of World Interfaith Harmony Week. It urged Member States to designate the first week of February each year as World Interfaith Harmony Week, when messages of goodwill and tolerance are spread through mosques, churches and other places of worship. While that was a good beginning for promoting peace and harmony among religions and peoples of different belief systems, the United Nations must do more to counter the continuing attacks on Islam, in particular by people who do not even believe in the existence of a supreme creator called Allah. Those infidels have no moral high ground to describe any religion — because they do not believe in God, and religion belongs to God — much less say anything about a religion as pure, authentic and noble as Islam.

Finally, the United Nations must play its central role in addressing the injustices associated with the unilateral or bilateral application of economic and financial sanctions by one Member State against another as a coercive tool of foreign policy, because that contravenes the fundamental principles of international law, international humanitarian law and the principles and norms governing peaceful coexistence among sovereign States. In that regard, the Gambia calls on the United States Government to unconditionally end the long-standing United States embargo on Cuba, which has brought about untold hardship for the Cuban people. Is it not ironic that the Power talking today about respecting Ukrainian sovereignty and freedom to choose their own way of life is the same Power that has maintained a system of unjustifiable collective

punishment against the Cuban people for almost five decades, thereby devastating their economy, simply because, just as the Ukrainians today, Cubans decades ago opted for a system of governance of their choice?

That brings me to the subject of climate change. Climate change and development are inextricably linked. The impact of climate change is felt in all countries, particularly developing countries, as it undermines their ability to achieve sustainable development. While Africa is not responsible for the pollution and the other factors causing climate change, it stands to suffer the most. With 96 per cent of Africa's agriculture being dependent on rainfall and 50 per cent of the fisheries-related jobs estimated to be lost by 2050, climate change poses dire consequences for livelihoods in Africa. The Gambia firmly believes that mitigating the adverse effects of climate change requires a timely and decisive global response. It is a challenge that should unite us, not divide us. In that regard, the Gambia joins other countries affected by climate change and like-minded groups in urging the developed countries that are parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to fully implement their commitments under the Kyoto Protocol.

In 1974, the Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order (resolution 3201 (S-VI)), which was designed to address some legitimate concerns of developing countries, such as improving their terms of trade and other issues relating to the promotion of a more equitable international economic system. Many of the political, economic and social issues that inspired the new international economic order still remain unresolved, four decades after that historic declaration. As the post-2015 agenda attracts our attention today, we must not relegate those old concerns of developing countries to the dustbin of history. In a nutshell, their old concerns, as well as their new aspirations, must no longer be set aside. To that end, the foundation of any transformative agenda should logically begin with genuine reform of the global governance institutions, particularly the United Nations system.

Given the current membership of the Security Council, the reform of that important organ of the world body is long overdue. We African leaders have for a very long time been calling attention to the need to restore the effectiveness and legitimacy of the United Nations by allocating two permanent Seats with full veto powers, as well as two non-permanent seats on the Security Council to reflect current geopolitical realities.

If the demands for the reform of the Security Council in the interest of equity and justice cannot be accommodated, then concrete action must be taken for the General Assembly to assume all the powers of the Security Council and its responsibilities, including the power to impose sanctions. Under such an arrangement, all decisions of the General Assembly would have to be voted for by all Members and endorsed by the majority of its membership, thus ensuring a more democratic and transparent global body called the United Nations.

On a final note, I want to call the attention of the General Assembly and the Security Council to the very frequent and mysterious sinking and capsizing of boats carrying mostly black African migrants looking for greener pastures in the West, only to end up in body bags on European shores. Strangely enough, those countries, which pretend to love Africans so much that they are always preaching to African leaders about good governance, the rule of law and respect for human life and rights, have been eerily quiet about the very dangerous, racist and inhuman behaviour of deliberately causing boats carrying black Africans to sink, selecting only a few lucky ones to be rescued and sent to concentration camps, called asylum-seeker camps. Those camps are as bad as Nazi concentration camps, and nobody, no country or human rights institution in the West has ever raised the alarm to that sort of genocide in the twenty-first century.

If earlier Africans who received the European explorers before colonialism had treated them the same way, Africa would not have been colonized for 400 years. The European explorers were nothing short of people seeking greener pastures for their fellow Europeans, as Europe had, at the time, turned into brown pastures. After 400 years of colonial looting and misrule in Africa, Africa today is reduced from green to brown pastures, owing to overgrazing. Now African explorers are not only unwelcome, but are greeted with instant death on European soil. That is unacceptable.

The United Nations must therefore conduct a full and impartial investigation into that man-made catastrophe, namely, the sinking or capsizing of boats carrying young Africans to Europe. If those boats are able to cross the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, only to sink on European coasts, we must find out what deadly mysterious force exists on the European Mediterranean coasts that causes boats carrying young

Africans to disintegrate and sink upon arrival. Racism, greed and hatred can only breed hatred, violence and disastrous confrontation between races. We African leaders should stand up together, I hope, to protect those young Africans from mass murder on European coasts. I hereby call on the United Nations to commission such an investigation as a matter of priority and urgency in order to avert a major racial confrontation. We have the right as Africans to defend our black people, wherever they are. As we welcomed all races to Africa, we will not accept that Africans should be treated like dogs, with impunity. That is unacceptable. If the United Nations fails to take action, we will take action. And the action we take will be determined by us.

In the Gambia we do not attack people because they are white or black, or because of their religion. No foreigner in the Gambia would say, "I was attacked because I am a foreigner". If a foreigner comes into contact with the police, it is because he has committed an offence for which even a Gambian would be arrested. If we cannot tolerate each other, the world will never see peace, because nobody can stop migration. The Almighty Allah created this world for us to move around, the same way Europeans moved around when Europe was bankrupt. Europeans came to Africa for 400 years. We never killed them. They overstayed, and some of us had to fight to get them out. Now they have overgrazed our land. We also want greener pastures, but Europeans cannot accept us. Let them send Africans back, but do not kill them. Europeans have no right to kill them.

Out of the hundreds of European explorers who came to the Gambia in those days, only one European died on the River Gambia over a span of 400 years. Today, over a span of five years, more than 500 Gambians have lost their lives on European coasts. That is unacceptable. Enough is enough, and the United Nations must intervene, and intervene quickly, or else we will all live to regret our failure to take appropriate action at the right time.

Geopolitical realities have changed. Let the West accept that, and with us endeavour to change along with those realities, as we move together towards the peaceful, brighter future we want. The so-called military super-Powers must know that humankind would be sent back to a pre-Stone Age should they be reckless enough to unleash World War III.

We cannot have our cake, eat it as we please, and at the same time dictate to others how, when and where they should eat theirs. In the twenty-first century, humankind has a need only for super-Powers of peace and development, not for mediaeval European-style warmongers. Why can we not accept the diversity of the human race and its attendant diversity in cultures, religions and ways of life as each of its diverse groups deems fit?

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of the Gambia for the statement he has just made.

Al Hadji Yahya Jammeh, President of the Republic of the Gambia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Bronisław Komorowski, President of the Republic of Poland

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Poland.

Mr. Bronisław Komorowski, President of the Republic of Poland, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Bronisław Komorowski, President of the Republic of Poland, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Komorowski (*spoke in Polish; English text provided by the delegation*): I would first like to congratulate Mr. Kutesa on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session.

In the opening sentences of our Charter, we read that the United Nations was set up to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights and in the equal rights of nations large and small. In the year marking the 100th anniversary of the start of the First World War and the seventy-fifth of the start of the Second World War, those words hold a particular resonance for us — for Poles, Europeans and every society affected by those tragedies. Both wars were waged partly on Polish territory; the second began with Nazi Germany's aggression in collaboration with the Soviet Union. Our past compels us to reflect on the Charter's words and those events of twentieth-century history, which form the backdrop to our decision-making at the national

level, and similarly bind together the entire international community gathered here at the United Nations.

One result of the First World War was to foster the dream of a world without war. That belief and general desire bore fruit in the League of Nations, the first collective security system in history. It included all the factors needed to make a positive mark on history and to maintain peace and security. It functioned on a foundation of important rules that prohibited war and encouraged the peaceful settlement of disputes. It had shared bodies, disarmament conferences and an international judiciary.

Despite all those institutions, however, we were unable to make a world without wars. The League eventually became an easy target, if not an object of ridicule. Yet it was not the League itself that failed. It was failed by its members, and chiefly by the Powers that had been entrusted with special responsibility for implementing its principal task. They failed their test in the face of the expansion of totalitarian regimes on both the left and the right. The emergence of communism, national socialism and many militaristic dictatorships was in part due to the First World War. Those systems fed on conflict, because ideological war and war against other peoples — against other men — were part of their identity.

Those threats could have been resisted in time, but the democratic world failed, choosing a short-sighted policy of appeasement and the satisfaction of dictatorships' appetites at the expense of weaker States. The price paid for that negligence was the Second World War, and the whole of humankind had to pay a price that would once have been unimaginable. It is from the horrible experience of that war, of the Holocaust, that the legal notion of genocide stems. Its originator and the author of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide was a Polish lawyer, Raphael Lemkin, who understood the criminal nature of both kinds of totalitarianism even before the war.

After the hecatombs of the war, the international community decided once again to build a system of collective security. I am glad that next year we will be celebrating the seventieth anniversary of the foundation of the United Nations. There are very few now who remember the world without our Organization, and it would be difficult to imagine the world without its activity. During the nearly seven decades of its existence, the United Nations has had a track record of amazing achievements, but also many failures.

Today, however, the situation is especially worrying, as symptoms of the problems that once brought down the League of Nations are reappearing. We are witnessing a rebirth of the super-Power, a return to the thinking that divided the world into categories of geopolitical zones of influence and that has already led the international community into a morass of hatred, confrontation and conflict. The United Nations should remain vigilant in the face of a return to such attitudes— it should tolerate no departure from the principles of security and international relations laid down in the Charter. Tolerance of such attitudes always ends badly and not infrequently leads to catastrophe.

We cannot overemphasize that the occupation of Crimea and the aggression in Ukraine violate the standards of international law and trample on the fundamental values of the United Nations. The ideological background of the conflict is a return to the rhetoric of the first half of the twentieth century, a return to the logic of zones of influence, of might is right, and of ruthless imperial domination of weaker neighbours, which are apparently obliged to be obedient satellites of a Power redesigning the foundations of the civilized international order.

The Security Council, the organ responsible for peace, proved to be ineffective when faced with conflicts in Ukraine and other regions of the world, partly due to its rules of operation. We are threatened by a further descent into powerlessness if such rules are not amended. It is salutary that the General Assembly rose to the challenge when, in resolution 68/262, of 27 March 2014, it took the side of the weaker party that was being targeted in an act of imperial aggression.

I feel all the more sad and concerned uttering the foregoing words, since we are celebrating the joyful twenty-fifth anniversary of the abolishment of communism and the collapse of the Soviet bloc in Poland, which is also being celebrated in other countries of the region. That "spring of nations", the second in the history of Europe, brought freedom to the nations of Central and Eastern Europe and respect for human rights and good democratic governance. At the time, changes for the better took place throughout Europe, and even worldwide. The Iron Curtain fell and so did the bipolar division of the world. The Cold War confrontation and its accompanying threats of nuclear conflict became things of the past.

That historical change began in Poland with the establishment of the 10 million-strong Solidarity movement, a peaceful opposition movement against totalitarian oppression and the violation of nations' rights. The victorious parliamentary elections of 4 June brought about the formation, on 12 September 1989, of the first non-Communist Government in our part of Europe since the Second World War, the Government of Tadeusz Mazowiecki.

Just two weeks later, on 25 September, precisely 25 years ago, the Minister for Foreign Affairs in that new Government, Professor Krzysztof Skubiszewski, addressed the Assembly from this very rostrum (see A/44/PV.4) and proclaimed that the new Poland would not respect the logic of zones of influence. He further revealed that we would respect existing treaties and obligations, as well as the security interests of other States, and none of that would result in any limitations with respect to choosing or changing the system of polity.

That new logic of international relations has been most beneficial for Europe, where a great wave of unification has been set in motion thanks to the strengthening of the mechanisms of integration of the European Community and its expansion to include many new States. In our region, the European Union is a synonym for peace. It was established so that there would be no more wars on a continent that had previously been notorious for them. And indeed, the European Union has become a significant force for peace in Europe and far beyond its borders, to which Poland has contributed in a highly active way.

We had the right to hope that the benefits of the end of divisions in Europe and of the logic of imperial zones of influence would be shared by a growing number of States and nations — and not only in Europe — and that they would be able to decide their fate democratically and build their lives in peace and prosperity, free from external domination. We have hoped and continue to hope for a democratic modernization of Russia. But what happened six months ago in Eastern Europe dealt a blow to that hope and threatened security on our European continent. In our part of Europe, people are again asking themselves whether war as a method of obtaining a political goal will also be the long-term European reality. We cannot acquiesce to the brutalization of international life anywhere in the world — far less so in Europe, where the wounds of two World Wars are still healing.

Yet wars and conflicts are also continuing in other parts of our globe and are creating countless victims, suffering and destruction. We have all been surprised by the rapid development of the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). The brutality of the actions of its fighters, who are murdering and persecuting people of every faith, including those who profess Islam, must inspire terror and trigger a response from the international community. ISIL's barbarism is a challenge for all of humankind, irrespective of religion, ethnic origin or political viewpoint. We, the States faithful to the United Nations Charter, cannot shirk our responsibility for providing security. We are responsible for protecting those threatened by cruel violence. Yet everything must be done to ensure that the actions we take do not contravene the United Nations Charter.

We express our concern and sympathy for the civilian victims of the conflicts and tragedies in Syria, Libya, Israel, the Gaza Strip and many African States. All those conflicts, and to an even greater degree the civil wars in some African countries, are accompanied by humanitarian catastrophes. The United Nations, and especially the super-Powers that can influence the participating parties, should do everything to stop them.

Nobody could ever take the place of the United Nations and its agencies in providing aid to refugees and other victims of humanitarian tragedies. On behalf of Poland, I hereby express appreciation for them. and recognition for the thousands of courageous members of humanitarian organizations, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations who, amid all the dangers and frequently at the cost of their own lives, hurry to the aid of those who suffer persecution. They help those whose security and health is threatened — those left alone, without a roof over their heads, who are far away from homes to which, due to destruction, many will never be able to return. An ever-increasing number of people are experiencing suffering and cruelty linked to military conflicts. That horrifying trend must be stopped by our common efforts.

The fact that, in so many places, we are witnessing conflicts that entail human tragedy and the deaths of thousands of people is due, as a general rule, to a failure to observe fundamental human rights. Entire communities and nations are denied influence over political decisions. Power without control is, in most cases, corrupt and self-loving, incapable of lifting

countries out of underdevelopment and poverty. That is the background to the conflicts and rebellions in Ukraine, Iraq, Libya and many other places in the world. That is why we must increase our efforts to help by offering development assistance to bring about social, economic and political transformation. Otherwise, the only alternative to dictatorship will be chaos.

Poland is especially attached to the role of democracy in the life of nations, their development and international activity. We know how much we lost because of the absence of democracy under communism, and we know how much we gained when we returned to democracy as a means of achieving our civic aspirations and an expression of our national sovereignty. It was for that purpose that a broad international initiative by the Community of Democracies was born in Warsaw in 2000. That is precisely why my country established the international Lech Wałęsa Solidarity Award for activity in support of democracy and fundamental freedoms.

Poland steadfastly believes that sustainable development cannot be achieved without the rule of law and respect for fundamental rights and freedoms for all. We will strive to attain the appropriate inclusion of those questions in the new United Nations development agenda. Through our experiences over the past few decades in our history, we have learned the importance of solidarity, responsibility and involvement — the triad of principles in the United Nations system we are faithful to.

We fully acknowledge the involvement of the United Nations in the improvement of the social and economic situation in those regions of the world where conditions are the most difficult. Poland actively participates in the definition of the priorities and means of implementation of the new development agenda that will replace the Millennium Development Goals of 2000, and we will purposefully participate in making it a reality. The new development agenda should fully and coherently integrate the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, while at the same time focusing on the reduction of poverty and protection of the natural environment.

Reaching an international understanding on that matter is a task that is as ambitious as it is difficult — yet it is necessary and feasible. The output of the previous Assembly session, worked on by the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals under the highly efficient co-chairmanship of Kenya and Hungary, defines the course of further discussion on the matter. Poland will continue its active involvement in a dialogue that should bring about the development of a new, ambitious and universal post-2015 development agenda.

It is vitally important to halt any further global climate change caused by the development of human civilization and to adjust to the changes that are already irreversible. Here lurk existential issues pertaining to security, the problems of economic development, the maintenance of biological diversity in the Earth's ecosystem and quality of life. In its capacity as host of the United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Warsaw in November 2013, and as we still hold the presidency of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Poland remains committed to achieving a successful conclusion to the negotiations. We believe that it is possible to achieve an understanding in a manner that is fair to countries at various levels of economic development. Agreement is possible, and I hope such an understanding will be arrived at in the near future. I would like to reiterate that, despite the hardships and costs of economic transformation, Poland has decreased its greenhouse gas emissions by approximately 30 per cent since 1988 — that is, it has greatly exceeded the reduction obligations stipulated in the Kyoto Protocol.

Poland is deeply involved in various fields of activity covered by this Organization, ranging from human rights to disarmament. That is why we know perfectly well that nothing can replace the United Nations system, which is continuously improvable. Poland is currently assuming an increasing measure of responsibility for cooperation in development, humanitarian aid and climate protection. We are ready to share our experience and our ideas as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for the period 2018-2019. We intend to support a reform of that body that will increase its representative character and, in parallel, reinforce its efficiency. The reform should primarily concern the Council's mandate in situations involving the principle of the responsibility to protect, which was approved by our community in 2005. The idea must be to develop a mechanism that will provide the Council with the capacity to act in such situations, while at the same time making it impossible to use the mandate of the Council for purposes other than the discharge of that responsibility.

I have raised that idea from this rostrum twice already. It should perhaps be combined with a broader reform of the Council, the outlines of which were given shape before the historic summit held in 2005. The situation is unchanged from nearly 70 years ago — we want to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights and the rights of nations, large and small.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Poland for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Bronislaw Komorowski, President of the Republic of Poland, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Andris Bērziņš, President of the Republic of Latvia

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Latvia.

Mr. Andris Bērziņš, President of the Republic of Latvia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Andris Bērziņš, President of the Republic of Latvia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Bērziņš: As we enter a crucial session of the General Assembly, we will define our post-2015 direction. Our way ahead must be based on the triangle of security, development and human rights. If one of those elements is not present, the other two will fail.

This year, we commemorated the grim anniversaries of the First and Second World Wars. Both wars began in Europe, but quickly spread throughout the world, destroying the lives of countless millions. The League of Nations and the United Nations were built on the ashes of those wars.

Today again, global security and peace are challenged by forces willing to rewrite the history and rules of the international order. The aggression of Russia against Ukraine has defied the basic principles of the United Nations, uprooting the very foundation of the international system. It has grabbed part of a sovereign European country, using previously unseen tactics of warfare and immense propaganda against its neighbour. It enabled the tragic shooting down of a civilian airplane. It has shown that agreements and commitments do not matter, and it wantonly ignores and manipulates international opinion. Those actions cannot be qualified otherwise than as a threat to global peace and security. The world, including the General Assembly, has supported Ukraine's territorial integrity. The illegal annexation of Crimea and Sebastopol by Russia has been condemned and will not be recognized by the international community.

Russia has a vital role to play in security and stability in Europe and should be part of the solution — not part of the problem. Latvia hopes that the ceasefire agreed to on 5 September will be implemented in a sustainable manner. Latvia therefore calls on Russia to immediately withdraw its armed forces from Ukrainian territory and stop sending weapons and mercenaries to the terrorist groups. We call upon Russia to return to respecting its international commitments and upholding international law.

Seventy-five years ago, the decay of the international system proved fatal to the Baltic States. Two totalitarian regimes — one under Hitler and the other under Stalin — divided Europe, and we lost our freedom for 50 long years. Twenty-five years ago, more than 2 million people joined hands and formed a human chain across Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The Baltic way clearly illustrated the people's demand for freedom and restoration of their statehood. The Baltic people made their choice. The Ukrainian people have the same right to choose their own democratic path, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Latvia supports the complementarity of efforts among international organizations at both the global and regional levels to use all instruments at their disposal to prevent the emergence of a frozen conflict in the eastern region of Ukraine; to help and support Ukraine; to uphold agreements and commitments and demand their fulfilment by all parties, including Russia; to maintain unity and reject attempts to divide Ukraine by reviving spheres of influence and establishing hidden support to terrorists as part of the new norms of Europe.

There is no alternative to an international order based on the rule of law, democracy and respect for human rights and providing the foundation for long-term peace and security. The resolution of the protracted conflicts in Transnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno Karabakh should remain high on the international agenda.

In addition, the security situation in the wider Middle East is very fragile. A solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is paramount in order to establish lasting stability in the region. Following the escalation of violence in recent months, the international community, including Latvia, has helped to address the emergency humanitarian needs of the people of Gaza. We hope that the current ceasefire will be fully respected by both sides. However, only an agreement on a two-State solution, achieved through direct negotiations, will accomplish those goals.

We welcome the elimination of Syria's chemical weapons and related materials. While easing the continuing human suffering of Syrians is the immediate goal, the international community must continue political efforts to find a solution to that horrific conflict. Those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Syria must be held accountable by the International Criminal Court.

The limited ability of the Security Council to address the urgent situations in Syria and Ukraine in a timely manner underlines the need to move forward with reform of the Council. Latvia supports the expansion of the Security Council in both categories of membership. At the same time, the French initiative, aimed at restricting the use of the veto, merits our joint attention.

The completion of the International Security Assistance Force mission in Afghanistan this year will be an important step towards assumption by the people of full responsibility for peace and stability in the country. Despite all the challenges, the legacy of the mission is clear. Peace and security have been strengthened, including greater respect for human rights and greater opportunities for the Afghan people than ever before.

The recent presidential elections clearly showed the will of the Afghan people to live in a peaceful and democratic society. The people of Afghanistan will not be abandoned after 2014. International support to Afghanistan, including security protection, will be continued. I am convinced that cooperation and confidence-building between Afghanistan and its neighbours, including in Central Asia, will be key to long-term security solutions in the region.

The growing negative impact of violent extremist ideologies in Syria, Iraq and other countries is alarming. Militant fighters of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) have exploited instability in those countries and now pose a threat to ethnic and religious communities. In that context, Latvia joined the United States in coordinated efforts by the international community to counter ISIS. We strongly welcome the adoption of Security Council resolution 2178 (2014) on foreign fighters. Latvia has already begun to prepare measures to prevent the recruitment of and support to foreign fighters.

Latvia is concerned about the safety of journalists during political unrest and conflict. All imprisoned journalists must be released. Freedom of the media and free access to information, including online, are essential components of any democracy.

Armed conflicts in Africa have an impact upon stability and the sustainable development of the people. Latvia takes part in peace and security operations in Mali and the Central African Republic in order to contribute to conflict settlement and to improve the security situation in those regions. Latvia is ready to commit itself to strengthening United Nations global peacekeeping.

Latvia welcomes the ongoing dialogue between the E3+3 countries and Iran, which aims to negotiate a comprehensive agreement on Iran's nuclear programme. The parties involved, in particular Iran, must make every effort to use the extended time frame to find a solution. We must work towards revitalizing the global disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. The success of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons depends on re-establishing trust and a common purpose among the States parties. Latvia was one of the first States to sign and to ratify the Arms Trade Treaty. We urge all United Nations Members to do the same.

Peace and security are both enablers of sustainable development and objectives in their own right. Without peaceful societies, we cannot achieve sustainable development. Each country has its own responsibility for achieving that goal. Our societies need honest and accountable Governments that protect them from violence and crime and ensure fundamental freedoms and sustainable economic growth.

Fourteen years ago, we, the States Members of the United Nations, made a historic commitment to eradicating extreme poverty and to improving the health and welfare of the world's people within 15 years. The new development agenda should go further. We must

address global challenges, such as conflicts, terrorism, inequalities, the absence of the rule of law, climate change and natural disasters. The social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainability should be addressed in a balanced way.

Ms. Gunnarsdóttir (Iceland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

I thank the Secretary-General for his personal engagement in bringing together representatives of Governments, business, industry, finance and civil society to discuss climate change this week. Latvia supports the initiatives of the Secretary-General. The post-2015 agenda must be consistent with all human rights and be underpinned by the rule of law. It should address inequalities and discrimination, including by means of the advancement of information and communications technology. Those are key enablers for all spheres of development. Gender equality is essential to shaping respectful and equal relationships in society. Those values are important for Latvia. As an aspiring member of the Human Rights Council for the term 2015-2017, we will continue to promote such values globally. Last but not least, the post-2015 agenda should be built on strong accountability mechanisms and a strengthened global partnership. That requires the active engagement of Governments, civil society, the private sector and the United Nation system.

In the first half of 2015, Latvia will assume the presidency of the Council of the European Union. Europe needs the world as much as the world needs Europe. That is why the Latvian presidency will focus on strengthening the European Union's involvement globally. We will actively work to promote Europe's cooperation with its neighbours and with the countries of Central Asia. I affirm my country's commitment to actively engaging in efforts to shape our common future.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Latvia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Andris Bērziņš, President of the Republic of Latvia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Ali Bongo Ondimba, President of the Gabonese Republic

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Gabonese Republic.

Mr. Ali Bongo Ondimba, President of the Gabonese Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Ali Bongo Ondimba, President of the Gabonese Republic, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Bongo Ondimba (*spoke in French*): I would first of all like to extend my sincere congratulations to Mr. Sam Kutesa on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. I assure him of the full support of my country. The remarkable work of his predecessor, Mr. John William Ashe, during the sixty-eighth session deserves our recognition. The same goes for the commendable and tireless efforts of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon as head of the Organization.

At the previous session, we deplored and condemned the cowardly terrorist attacks on the shopping centre in Nairobi. Now, inevitably, the current session takes place in an equally worrisome context, marked by serious threats to international peace and security. First, there is the advance of the elusive Boko Haram terrorist network, which is extending its area of influence to the border of the neighbouring countries of Gabon, wreaking havoc and killing without discrimination. Then, there is the recurrence of the epidemic of the Ebola haemorrhagic fever, with an unprecedented incidence of infection, which is plunging Africa into mourning. Allow me to pay tribute to the memory of those who have lost their lives trying to help those who are ill. I also pay solemn tribute to the men and women who risk their lives in their daily fight to eradicate the pandemic.

Given that the threat of Ebola is worldwide, national responses should be replaced by a comprehensive mobilization at the global level. In that regard, my country welcomes the recent steps taken by the African Union and the United Nations, as well as the many national initiatives that have been announced. I welcome the United Nations decision to dispatch an emergency medical mission to fight the Ebola epidemic in the affected countries. My country, which prevailed in its fight against several Ebola crises in the past, intends to make available the International Centre for Medical Research Centre in Franceville. The Centre's expertise in treating that disease has been proven.

I am pleased that this session allows us to debate a topic that concerns all of us, namely "Delivering on and implementing a transformative post-2015 development agenda". For Gabon, the report recently adopted by the General Assembly on sustainable development goals (A/68/970) is a solid foundation in the development of that agenda. My country welcomes the fact that African priorities, including the eradication of extreme poverty, the promotion of sustainable agriculture and industrialization, and the protection of the environment, all figure prominently in that report.

I would like to recall here that Gabon entered the post-2015 development agenda process when it began to implement the Strategic Plan for an Emerging Gabon. The plan is based on a vision, an approach that has led us to define a bold development programme. That programme, of course, incorporates the concerns reflected in the Millennium Development Goals, as well as the challenges of climate change and food security. It gives pride of place to everything that promotes the maximization of our youth potential. The strategy implemented by Gabon aims to accelerate the structural transformation of its economy by moving from a rentier economy to an economy of industries and services with high added-value in the near future.

In the current phase of implementing that programme, special attention is being devoted to competitiveness factors, such as the formation of human capital and the construction and upgrading of development infrastructure, including the development of a digital economy and the strengthening of energy-production capacities. Over the short term, we intend to devote greater efforts to education and training in order to improve the performance of our basic education system. The goal here is to enhance the employability of our workforce, provide a qualified labour force for our labour market and accelerate the integration of young people into the workforce. The development of agriculture, livestock, fisheries and aquaculture, as well as food security, continues to receive sustained attention from my Government. Those are all areas where we thought it best to anticipate our leap in the post-2015 development agenda.

It is common knowledge that all those efforts can truly thrive only in a political, economic and social environment marked by good governance. To that end, Gabon has established various institutional instruments, such as the National Commission for the Fight against Illicit Enrichment, whose overall mission is to ensure transparency and accountability in the management of public funds. Since then, I have made the fight against corruption a priority strategic objective. Right now, large-scale inspection and verification missions are under way throughout the country with substantial results. I remain firmly convinced that, in order to establish a solid foundation for our post-2015 agenda, we need to tailor our economic environment, so as to ensure that transparency guides the awarding of public contracts and licenses, that investments produce a good return, and that economic actors respect their obligations vis-à-vis the State.

Gabon's commitment to the fight against climate change remains constant, given the seriousness of the problem. Indeed, as has already been pointed out, the latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change draws attention to the harsh reality of the damage caused by climate change. It would be wrong on our part to remain insensitive in the face of what is transpiring before our very eyes. That is why I welcome the commitments made by the heads of State and Government at the end of the Climate Summit held here on 23 September.

I reiterate Gabon's determination to bear its share of our common duty. Gabon's objective is to reduce, by 2025, more than half the greenhouse gas emissions per capita produced by every Gabonese. My country wishes to strengthen its contribution to the efforts of the international community aimed at the adoption of a more binding agreement to succeed the Kyoto Protocol. That is the purpose of the meeting that we will organize in Libreville from 18 to 19 March 2015, our "South Climate Initiative." As part of that initiative, which will take place after the important Lima Conference, we, the countries of the South, want to make a structured contribution for the success of the Paris Conference. The scale of climatic upheavals caused by global warming shows that climate change is a vital, even existential question. Given the extreme seriousness of the danger confronting us, we must unite. We need to work hand in hand towards the same goal, namely, to save the planet in Paris in December 2015.

In just one year, our Organization will celebrate its seventieth anniversary. That maturity should enable it to better respond to the multifaceted challenges that it faces. The effective implementation of the post-2015 development agenda must also be tackled. That is why we must continue our efforts to resolve crises and hotbeds of tension in various parts of the world.

Regarding the Central African Republic, Gabon continues to actively participate in the efforts of the Economic Community of Central African States, the African Union, the United Nations and the rest of the international community in seeking to stabilize the political, security, economic and humanitarian situation on the ground.

In that connection, I want to pay tribute to the Brazzaville Forum for National Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, which concluded with the signing of a ceasefire agreement. Moreover, Gabon welcomes the effective establishment of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, which took over from the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic. Regarding Mali, Gabon supports the peace process that has been launched and supports the mediation efforts by Burkina Faso, Algeria and Morocco aimed at achieving a lasting peace. In South Sudan, Gabon supports the efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the African Union in the search for a negotiated political solution between the two parties.

Regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, I welcome the signing, under Egyptian mediation, of a ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas. My hope is that that truce lasts and promotes the resumption of direct negotiations to achieve the widely shared vision of creating a viable Palestinian State existing in harmony alongside Israel in peace and security, within secure and internationally recognized borders.

Regarding Western Sahara, Gabon welcomes the efforts based on dialogue and negotiations agreed to by our Organization. My country wants to reiterate its support for the Moroccan initiative, which we consider to be a courageous and realistic proposal that could lead to a lasting settlement. Finally, in terms of the embargo against Cuba, Gabon reiterates its position in favour of lifting it, because of its negative impact on the welfare of the population.

Never has the terrorist threat been as strong as in recent times, jeopardizing the survival of the institutions of the countries affected by that terrible phenomenon. In Africa, Boko Haram's activism pushes entire populations to live far from their homes and in terror, poverty and despair.

In the Middle East, the so-called Islamic State has extended its gruesome reign from eastern Syria to northern Iraq. Its establishment there has been accompanied by a lengthy sequence of rape, summary executions, decapitations and punishments of all types inflicted upon all those who, in the eyes of the extremists, symbolize the rejection of their radicalization.

As no nation is now spared the murderous folly of those negative entities, the fight against terrorism needs to be more concerted and organized. My country reiterates its support for international efforts undertaken to that end and reaffirms its firm condemnation of terrorist acts in all their forms and manifestations. In seeking to meet the security challenge of terrorism, we need to strengthen the operational capacities of our defence and security forces in conformity with the spirit of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Our concerns for peace and security are compounded by other cross-cutting threats, notably the poaching of and illicit trafficking in protected species. That growing phenomenon, especially in Central Africa, constitutes a threat at three levels: ecological, economic and security. My country therefore remains wedded to the London initiative of February 2014. We reaffirm our commitment to opposing poaching and to implementing a moratorium on the ivory trade. To that end, Gabon and Germany will organize tomorrow, 26 September. a side event on the issue.

My country is more determined than ever to cooperate further with other States in formulating a development tool that would take into account the global concerns of our populations. That will involve, inter alia, achieving progress in the reform of the United Nations system. It is from that perspective that Gabon, like other States Members of the United Nations, adheres to the "Delivering as one" initiative. Currently at the very core of United Nations reform, that approach aims at improving the coherence of the United Nations system's operational development activities.

Respect for human dignity and for fundamental freedoms remains at the heart of my Government's concerns. That factor underpins our chairmanship of the Human Rights Council, which we are holding in a very difficult international context marked by numerous human rights violations. Despite all those challenges, the Council has been able to react and to respond with solutions to emergency situations caused by such violations. Gabon's leadership has allowed constructive debate and has in particular prevented a lapse into politicized and polarized discussions. I

should like to reiterate my gratitude to those countries that have lent us their support to ensure the success of our mandate.

From this rostrum, I encourage the inclusion of the human rights dimension in the current consideration of the post-2015 agenda. Gabon urges such inclusion, and suggests that particular emphasis be placed on the link between human rights and sustainable development. Given all this, Gabon remains committed to engaging, alongside other States, in seeking collective solutions adapted to current challenges in preparation for a better world.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Gabonese Republic for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Ali Bongo Ondimba, President of the Gabonese Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Juan Carlos Varela Rodríguez, President of the Republic of Panama

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Panama.

Mr. Juan Carlos Varela Rodríguez, President of the Republic of Panama, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Juan Carlos Varela Rodríguez, President of the Republic of Panama, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Varela Rodríguez (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I wish to congratulate Mr. Sam Kutesa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uganda, on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session.

I am from a region that, in my youth, lived through challenging conflicts. That inspired me to go into public life, which in turn has allowed me to address the General Assembly in my capacity as President of the Republic of Panama at a time when the world is enduring conflicts and very serious situations that call for all of us to take action. I am speaking on behalf of a noble, wholesome and peaceful people, whom I greet and warmly embrace from this rostrum. Panama is a peace-loving country that has granted me the opportunity to lead a Government that is steering our country to a foreign policy of unity and consensus, based on our geographic location and the mandate of being a champion of peace and the common good of all the inhabitants of this beautiful planet.

Despite the serious conflicts raging throughout the world today, America is at peace. The major challenges we face today are inequality, the fight against organized crime and drug and human trafficking, and the need to regulate migration flowing out of necessity into countries with more developed economies. Those challenges are being addressed by our Governments, but they require further coordination. As leaders, we must understand that in order to achieve and maintain peace throughout the world, we must first lead our nations along the same path. This is why I am committed to social justice, to strengthening the rule of law, and to leading an honest, humane Government that is in touch with the people and whose strength is based on the principle that public office is solely for the service of others, putting our country's resources at the service of the people of Panama, the region and the world.

Fourteen years ago, the Heads of State and of Government of the international community gathered in the General Assembly to approve the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), which defined a global development agenda to address various common challenges and improve the standards of living of our peoples. Despite their differences of the time, countries were able to agree and to reach a consensus to respect the priorities of each nation, focusing on the achievement of fundamental goals aimed at guaranteeing the human potential of our citizens.

Today, nearly a decade and a half after that historic Declaration, all countries without exception, through different Governments, have made important progress in meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Nonetheless, not only have many of the challenges defined in the MDGs not been met, but new ones have arisen that require us to build a new consensus and to establish goals at the regional, hemispheric and global levels. That is why, on behalf of the people and the Government of Panama, I would like to reiterate our commitment to being a facilitator of dialogue that allows for bringing the international community together anew so that we may redefine the post-2015 global development agenda.

For the past five centuries, the isthmus of Panama has been the transit route of civilizations. Today, our

country is still committed to that role. This year, as we mark the centennial of the Panama Canal, we reiterate our commitment to being a nation at the service of the international community, with the Canal, our logistic system, ports, airports and our heartfelt embrace of all countries of the world.

As they do in this building, the United Nations Headquarters, all the worlds' flags come together in the Panama Canal, and that is a source of pride and satisfaction for all Panamanians. It makes us a country of convergence, and we therefore have a great responsibility to the Panamanian people and the international community. Furthermore, Panama has assumed the challenge of completing the Canal expansion project, which we will do with firmness, determination and the support of professionals and workers from Panama and various other nations.

Panamanians feel a great responsibility to contributing to the search for understanding in order to maintain social peace, promote international security and join efforts towards the solution of common problems that affect us. That is why we reaffirm today our vocation as a country of dialogue, ready to fulfil the responsibility of uniting the Americas and the world within the framework of the United Nations and in every opportunity we have to mediate in disputes that hinder us from reaching agreements towards tackling the new global challenges. In April 2015, our country will host the Summit of the Americas, and we are working on this event that will bring together all the Heads of State and Government of our hemisphere in order to promote integration and social peace with equity and prosperity.

The 193 countries of the world have different political systems, beliefs, religions and cultures that must be respected. In spite of those differences, we all face common challenges. That is why, in order to secure the well-being of our citizens, our Governments are called to find unity of criteria for strengthening multilateral systems, which must be engaged with all the strength of States in order to combat shared threats and problems.

Within conflicts and difficult situations at the global level, there are strong messages of hope — volunteer medical doctors from all over the world are making progress to fight Ebola in Africa, and several countries are united in the fight against terrorists whose atrocious crimes affect innocent people and threaten international peace and security. Panama is aware of those efforts and supports them. We express our solidarity with all victims and their families.

I am convinced that the men and women we elect to public office must serve only the people who elected us and manage public power temporarily granted to us with the purpose of improving the quality of life of our population. Politics is one of the strongest expressions of public service because it is the search for the common good. The greatest legacy, which I will strive to build during the next five years, is to leave the Panamanian people a functional democracy, to strengthen the rule of law, where public servants are accountable only to the nation, with strong institutions, accountability and without impunity, with a view to guaranteeing that public administrations are honest and transparent. All Governments have the obligation to ensure that State resources are used exclusively in the service of our citizens, and that all public works and projects have the people's interests in mind.

Committed to that mission and to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, I became President of my country on 1 July and formed a Government that will continue to foster the economic growth enjoyed by Panama, while giving priority to public investment that has greater impact on the quality of life of all Panamanians. With an average domestic economic growth of 7 per cent, increasing foreign investment, legal security, low inflation and unemployment rates, and a consolidated democratic system, we are making good on the proposals for which I was elected.

During our mandate, we have taken strong measures to curb speculation in the cost of food. We are working to ensure that Panamanian families have adequate housing with access to drinking water, basic sanitation, water supply, sewage systems and treatment plants for waste water and solid waste. We have launched major social projects for our youth so that they grow up in safe neighbourhoods with better opportunities, jobs, sports facilities and cultural centres to keep them away from crime.

Our public schools will have adequate facilities and teachers trained in the English language, in order to promote a bilingual education. Our social welfare programmes will allow all students to finish high school and senior citizens to live with dignity. Our students will have the opportunity to go to college or study at newly established higher technical institutes that will prepare them for the new jobs that our economy is creating in the areas of logistics and tourism, inter alia.

Our public health system will be unified, and the resulting savings will be used to strengthen preventive health programmes, ensuring better medical care, and premium quality treatments and medication. We are building a modern and efficient public transportation system with the new projects to add second and third lines to the Metro of Panama City, thereby improving the quality of life of our people. We will develop tourism and support air connectivity to and from principal cities in the United States, Canada, Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe. We will protect our logistical and financial systems to prevent organized crime and gangs from gaining access to them, and we shall tackle organized crime and gangs with the full force of the State in order to defeat them and keep them away from our youth and our neighbourhoods.

Our Government will work tirelessly to prepare our young people to be responsible citizens of the world and care for our natural resources in order to ensure sustainable development. We will work closely with the private sector and civil society in order to fulfil those national goals, the Millennium Development Goals and the new challenges of the global agenda.

We live in a diverse world, with different cultures, religions and political systems, but we can always find common ground in the well-being of our citizens. That was the approach that led to the successful adoption of the Millennium Declaration, and it will be the key to defining and fulfilling the post-2015 development agenda.

Panama is a country that is respectful of others and willing to serve as a bridge to understanding, on the basis of respect for diversity, tolerance, pluralism and human rights. Above all, the Assembly can be assured that Panama's Government is a Government of men and women who respect the law and are willing to share experiences, learn from best practices and contribute to global peace, socio-economic development and the well-being of all peoples.

I would like to conclude by sharing a statement that has been with me since my youth: "The time has come to put our capacity to use in service of others." May God give us the strength to continue to build together a better world for our citizens and for future generations.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Panama for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Juan Carlos Varela Rodriguez, President of the Republic of Panama, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Joseph Kabila Kabange, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Joseph Kabila Kabange, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Joseph Kabila Kabange, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Kabila Kabange (*spoke in French*): I am delighted to be here today to once again make a contribution, on behalf of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to the debate on the present and future of humankind. I am especially delighted as this sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly is taking place at a time when the international situation is particularly delicate. If we are not careful, three of its phenomena in particular will surely delay us in achieving our agreed goals. I am referring to the issues of terrorism, the resurgence of Ebola in Africa and the many threats to peace in various areas around the globe.

Despite the commendable efforts of States and international organizations, terrorism, an extreme form of human intolerance, continues to claim victims — as many in number as they are innocent — around the world. Africa, which was once spared this type of senseless violence, is today at its epicentre. The people of Libya, Mali, Kenya, Somalia, Nigeria and many other countries in Europe, America and Asia are regularly bereaved by attacks, hostage-taking and summary executions. All States Members of our Organization must face the threat collectively, as a moral obligation and the only effective strategy to eradicate this barbarism surely and quickly.

Since the previous session of the General Assembly, a major public health problem has also hindered Africa on its path towards development, namely, through the loss in human lives caused by Ebola in some countries of sub-Saharan Africa. In less than six months, the disease has claimed over 2,000 lives, including approximately

40 in my own country. Africa is leading a heroic battle against the virus. It deserves support.

I am grateful to the international community, which is aware that, beyond the affected African populations today, all of humankind is under threat and which has extended its touching and effective solidarity to the affected countries. I thank the international community for its significant technical and logistical support in the response against the epidemic. In the future, I hope to see this fine example of human brotherhood prevail over the blind competition we see so often, and for it to occur with equal fervour in other sectors.

As for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which is being touched for the seventh time by this scourge, we have not only managed to contain this new epidemic at its origin — in Boende territory, Equateur province — but also provided support to the fight against the epidemic in West Africa. Now that we have all but mastered the situation within the country, the Democratic Republic of Congo is ready to once again send its experts to the other affected countries.

I take this opportunity to announce from this rostrum that, on the basis of its over 30 years of experience in the management of Ebola outbreaks, in October the Democratic Republic of the Congo will set up multidisciplinary training centres to train health personnel to respond adequately, in terms of quality and quantity of care, to the needs of African countries that have been or could in the future be affected by such an epidemic.

As for the wars that are engulfing various parts of the world, including the Middle East, Ukraine, Syria, Iraq, Libya and the Central African Republic, we should first recall that the United Nations was created following a world war, in order to establish mechanisms capable of preventing, or at least managing, situations that bring the world only grief and despair; and then we should ask ourselves why at this point, decades after the San Francisco Conference, humankind seems unable to maintain and guarantee peace. Knowing that in this area any contribution is welcome, I would like to reaffirm the commitment of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to working tirelessly for peace and stability in Africa and around the world. That is the reason for the presence of Congolese troop and police contingents in the Central African Republic.

The issue of peace is fundamental because, without it, humankind cannot realize or implement a transformative development programme, as the central theme of this session has it. Nor can that goal be achieved as long as terrorism is not contained and epidemics such as Ebola are not defeated. From experience, we Congolese know that there is no challenge that cannot be met provided there is the will, the way and the determination. We all know where my country was barely 13 years ago. Today I am happy to say that the Democratic Republic of the Congo is standing on its feet once more. It is a country where a newfound peace is consolidated a little more every day: a country whose economy is one of the most dynamic on the continent, with an inflation rate close to zero, a growth rate that has exceeded the African average for almost a decade, and steadily increasing foreign exchange reserves; a country undergoing total reconstruction, with roads, schools, hospitals and much other infrastructure being built at an unprecedented rate and speed.

On the political front, consolidating democracy and strengthening national cohesion remain our top priorities. In that regard, I wish to confirm that our forthcoming elections will soon be held according to the schedule set by the relevant national institution, the Independent National Electoral Commission. Every effort is bring made to ensure that our country will emerge from them stronger, more peaceful and more united.

Regarding security, through the application of a judicious mix of political dialogue, diplomacy and military action we have moved steadily closer to the goal we have set ourselves of banishing negative forces from our land and thus helping to bring peace to the eastern part of the country and to our neighbours. In order to consolidate peace and improve social conditions for the people, we are working to improve the business climate so as to stimulate investment, promote greater added value locally and create more jobs.

As can be seen, my country has resolutely taken the road of reconstruction, development and re-emergence and the defeat of poverty, injustice and inequality. It is an undeniably daunting task, and we still have some way to go to achieve our ultimate goal. But the people of the Congo are tackling it with enthusiasm and selflessness, determined as never before to make our march towards progress irreversible and to propel the country to a level of development commensurate with its potential. To do that, we must preserve stability at all costs, and that is what we will put the majority of our efforts into from

now on. And we count on the support of our partners in prioritizing everything that may involve.

Before concluding my remarks, I would like to reiterate the Democratic Republic of the Congo's continuing plea for Africa to be fairly represented in the decision-making organs of the United Nations, particularly the Security Council. The fact is that it does not make sense that Africa, a continent with six of the 10 fastest-growing economies in the world today, whose growth rate and youthful population are portents of future demographic power and whose forests, freshwater reserves and arable lands make it essential to the implementation of sustainable development strategies, does not have a permanent seat within the entity responsible for ensuring peace and international security. It is high time that this changed. It is a question of fairness, and it is also a condition of our collective effectiveness.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Joseph Kabila Kabange, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Rosen Plevneliev, President of the Republic of Bulgaria

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Bulgaria.

Mr. Rosen Plevneliev, President of the Republic of Bulgaria, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Rosen Plevneliev, President of the Republic of Bulgaria, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Plevneliev: Let me congratulate Mr. Sam Kutesa of Uganda on his assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. I also extend my warmest gratitude to Mr. John Ashe for his work as President of the sixty-eighth session.

Over the past few months, Bulgaria and the Balkans have suffered unprecedented floods. Thousands of people lost their homes, crops were ruined and many innocent people died. The heavy storms were no longer news but a part of daily life. Nature once again reminded us that today, political statements alone were not sufficient. For the sake of our children and our planet, it is time to act. As a wise man once said, we did not inherit the Earth from our fathers; we borrowed it from our children. Climate change needs to be urgently addressed. I would like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for having organized the Climate Summit. Bulgaria will actively support the completion of the negotiations on the new, universal and legally binding climate agreement in 2015.

Bulgaria contributed to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and the development of the post-2015 development agenda through its successful participation in the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. The Group has fulfilled its mandate. The Group's report, together with the report of High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (A/67/890, annex), will be the leading documents for our future discussions as we enter the critical phase of the debate on the post-2015 development agenda. It is crucial that all sides stay engaged and committed to the final goal — an ambitious and forward-looking framework. No real transformative post-2015 development agenda will be possible unless we address the loopholes of the current Millennium Development Goals and build upon the lessons learned. The new framework should be founded on the principles of respect for human rights, inclusiveness, good governance and the rule of law. Youth-specific targets in the areas of education, health care and employment are of paramount importance as well.

Development is unthinkable without peace and security. The illegal annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation and the conflict in eastern Ukraine have become one of the most serious threats to peace and security in Europe since the Second World War. The security environment in the Black Sea region has been seriously affected. The illegal annexation of Crimea undermines the international order. After the Second World War, we built our world on the clear principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations. They were shattered to pieces in a matter of weeks. Bulgaria strongly supports the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine. My country does not recognize the illegal referendum in Crimea and condemns the

annexation by Russia as a violation of international law. Bulgaria joined the numerous sponsors of resolution 68/262 on the territorial integrity of Ukraine.

My country welcomes the ceasefire agreement and is looking forward to the implementation of the peace plan. Bulgaria commends all international efforts for the peaceful resolution of the conflict. We welcome the strong engagement of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the initiatives of the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, as well as the efforts of the trilateral contact group. Russia should stop arming and supporting separatists in Ukraine.

In a few days, Ukrainians will vote for a new parliament. They have every right to choose their own future. I sincerely hope that those elections will be a major step forward in building a democratic and prosperous Ukraine. The signing and ratification of the European Union Association Agreements of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia represent an important milestone in the process of the European integration of those countries. The positive change witnessed today in the Balkans would not have been possible without the engine of the European integration.

The escalation of violence and the humanitarian situation in Syria continue to be a source of grave concern. Millions of refugees have fled their homeland in pursuit of peace in the neighbouring countries. Hundreds of thousands have lost their lives. More than 10,000 refugees have sought asylum in Bulgaria. A lasting solution to the conflict in Syria can be achieved only through an inclusive political process. We call on the Security Council to unite. The unity of the Security Council is crucial in order for the conflict to be resolved.

The Syrian crisis, along with the outbreak of violence and sectarian tensions in Iraq, has exacerbated the security and humanitarian situation in the entire Middle East region. Bulgaria strongly condemns the armed attacks and killings perpetrated by the Islamic State terrorist organization against religious and ethnic minorities and denounces the brutal execution of innocent people. Bulgaria is an integral part of the broad international coalition against terrorism. A member of the European Union and of NATO, my country lends its political support, as well as humanitarian and material aid, within the scope of its possibilities. We welcome the adoption of Security Council resolution 2178 (2014) on foreign terrorist fighters.

Combating radicalization, supporting State-building in Iraq and cooperating with regional partners are essential. We welcome the election of Mr. Haider Al Abadi as Prime Minister of Iraq. We hope that, under his leadership, a Government of broad representation will be established in order to preserve the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country.

Bulgaria greatly values the role of the United Nations in Iraq and appreciates the contribution of Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, former Bulgarian Foreign Minister, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq. We stand for a just and lasting settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on the two-State solution formula. That is possible only through direct negotiations with no preconditions and in conformity with the relevant international obligations. Any durable ceasefire should address both Israeli security concerns and Palestinian demands to abolish the Gaza closure regime.

The adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty was a major achievement of the international community. Just over a year later, the threshold of 50 ratifications was reached this morning. I am glad that my country is among those 50 States that have made the entry into force of that important legal instrument a reality. The Arms Trade Treaty fills a serious gap in international law. It establishes regulations for the trade in conventional arms at the global level. Now its implementation and universalization are of the utmost importance.

Twenty-five years ago, the Berlin Wall fell and the democratic transitions in Central and Eastern Europe began. My country Bulgaria chose to become a modern European democracy. We put our country back on the path of freedom, independence, the rule of law and respect for human rights. Our society has proved its firm commitment to democratic values and principles. We have witnessed similar political changes across South-East Europe. The Balkan countries have become partners, sharing the same values and projects for the future. We have built bridges of trust, friendship and mutual respect. We are working together to improve links and competition in order to increase prosperity in the Balkans.

Human rights, democracy and the rule of law are at the heart of my country's foreign policy. Bulgaria's commitment to advancing the human rights agenda throughout the United Nations system was further strengthened under the successful Bulgarian

chairmanship of the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee during the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly. Bulgaria is determined to further contribute to promoting and upholding human rights internationally as a member of the Human Rights Council for the period 2019-2021, and will rely on its partners' valuable support of its candidature.

My country welcomes the appointment of Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Husein of Jordan as the new United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights — an excellent choice by the Secretary-General. We wish Prince Zeid all success in fulfilling his mandate.

We support the Secretary-General's Rights Up Front Action Plan to safeguard human rights around the world. Bulgaria commends Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson for his insightful vision and global leadership with regard to that initiative and his valuable contribution to advancing the human rights agenda throughout the United Nations.

Bulgaria is concerned about the anti-Semitic attacks that have taken place recently, especially in Europe. As a country that saved 48,000 Bulgarian Jews from deportation during the Second World War, Bulgaria strongly condemns the recurring trend of brutal and disgusting manifestations of anti-Semitism.

This year, the international community is celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which set a universal standard for the effective promotion of children's rights. Bulgaria commends UNICEF for its enormous contribution during that time to improving children's lives and advancing the child agenda around the world. As a member of the Bureau of the UNICEF Executive Board this year, my country supports and actively participates in all efforts aimed at child protection and achieving results for children.

My country is convinced that the United Nations reform process should continue in order to enhance the efficiency, representativeness and transparency of the entire system, and to make it more adequate and responsive to the new realities. As a member of the Eastern European regional group, Bulgaria reiterates its position in favour of allocating at least one additional non-permanent seat to the Group in an enlarged Security Council. Bulgaria aspires to serve as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for the 2018-2019 term.

At the end of 2016, the second term of office of the current and highly respected Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, will come to an end. My country greatly values his outstanding leadership and commitment. Bulgaria expects that, when the time comes, the States Members of the United Nations will be able to elect a worthy successor. To that end I would like to recall the relevant General Assembly resolution, which states that,

> "[i]n the course of the identification and appointment of the best candidate for the post of Secretary-General, due regard shall continue to be given to regional rotation and shall also be given to gender equality" (*resolution 51/241, annex, para. 59*).

Bulgaria is convinced that the time has finally come for the East European regional group to be represented at the helm of the United Nations.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Bulgaria for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Rosen Plevneliev, President of the Republic of Bulgaria, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Bujar Nishani, President of the Republic of Albania

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Albania.

Mr. Bujar Nishani, President of the Republic of Albania, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Bujar Nishani, President of the Republic of Albania, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Nishani: It is a great pleasure for me to address the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. First, allow me to congratulate the President of the Assembly on his election to that post and to assure him of the full support of my country during this session. I believe that, under his leadership and given his prior experience, he will further advance the achievements of his predecessor, who worked with dedication to achieve concrete results.

In addition, I would like to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to the Secretary-General for his vision and leadership at the helm of the United Nations and his continuing efforts to revitalize and reform the Organization.

Albania is committed to an efficient and coherent United Nations, fit for its purpose as a multidimensional system. We support its strengthened role and contribution to efforts to preserve peace and security, eradicate poverty, inequality and disparity, achieve sustainable human and economic development, and promote respect for and protect human rights as a universal value of humankind. A more fitting United Nations, with the ability to swiftly respond to man-made or natural crises and effectively use available human and financial resources, is key to achieving those objectives in view of an increasingly chaotic and hungry world.

Maintaining, restoring and strengthening peace and security constitute one of the three pillars of the work of the United Nations. With so many resources and so much knowledge and manpower invested in dealing with the various and complex crises around the globe, it is simply impossible to ignore the contribution the Organization has made to the world, year upon year, decade upon decade. Yet in 2014 the challenges to peace, security and human values have continued, necessitating more responsive, coordinated and swift reactions on the part of the United Nations.

We deplore the events in South Sudan, where tragedies have been played out and continue to shake human consciences. Fighting along ethnic lines has brought far too much suffering to the innocent population. Only a negotiated political solution that considers, protects and respects the rights of all the communities concerned can help rebuild trust and understanding, turning the page on a better future for the youngest country in the world.

It is hard to find the words to describe the situation in Syria. After more than three years of deadly fighting, the country is barely liveable. Every kind of horrible act has happened there. More than 170,000 people have died, millions are refugees, and large parts of the country are in ruins. With fighting and mass atrocities being committed every day, any hope of ending the war is a remote dream for those still trapped there. Albania joined the initiative taken by some 60 States Members of the United Nations to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court. Unfortunately, like many other initiatives on Syria, the effort was vetoed in the Security Council. We reiterate and reaffirm that the perpetrators of atrocities in Syria must be held accountable and that the people of Syria deserve relief and justice.

The events this year in Ukraine have been deeply worrying. What we thought was behind us once and for all, what we believed belonged to the history books and would serve as a lesson for today's generation and those of the future — acts violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of another country, blatantly infringing and undermining the Charter of the United Nations — was unfortunately exhumed by a Member of the United Nations, a permanent member of the Security Council, the Russian Federation.

Despite all the propaganda that Russia spewed forth, the Ukrainian crisis had nothing to do with protecting the rights of ethnic Russians. It was much simpler — from the first, it was about the ambition of a more powerful country to redraw another's borders in order to satisfy its appetite for its neighbour's territory. Although the Security Council has been unable to act on this issue, the General Assembly voted overwhelmingly not to accept Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea. The States Members of the United Nations, including Albania, made clear their support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine and their full respect for the norms and principles of international law, and we reiterate that international relations must be governed by full respect for the principles and norms of international law and the Charter. The case of Ukraine is no exception.

With these crises and disasters erupting in a frightening pattern and the world spiraling into insecurity, development has also been under stress. The United Nations has contributed to raising global awareness of the challenges facing development and the sustainable solutions that can bring economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection and put our planet on a sustainable path.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) created one of the most successful global anti-poverty drives in history. Covering poverty, hunger, maternal and child health, gender equality, education and the environment, the MDGs have seen important progress at the national, regional and global levels and have improved the lives of millions. The number of people living in extreme poverty has been halved since 2005,

but with the deadline just months away, a lot remains to be done.

But another ambitious long-term sustainability agenda, designed to succeed the MDGs, is in the making. Albania has been an active participant in the global consultations focused on making the people's voices part of the formulation of the post-2015 development agenda. Albania has agreed to test a proposed development goal on governance and the rule of law designed to help countries achieve sustainable development. We hope our experience in monitoring governance, the rule of law and effective, capable institutions will help to inform the upcoming post-2015 agenda of the United Nations.

Terrorism remains a major threat to international peace and security, and the fight against terrorism is a priority that requires a greater commitment. We are aware that this global threat can be countered only with collective action and a powerful response. Albania condemns in the strongest terms all terrorist attacks by terrorist groups and organizations in Iraq and Syria, including and especially by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Conscious that terrorism is a threat without borders, a threat to human values and principles as well as to individual countries and regions, Albania has joined the recently created international coalition aimed at deterring and eventually defeating ISIL.

European integration and cooperation in our region, and the geopolitical and security situation in Europe, have changed significantly in recent months. The Western Balkans, of which my country is part, is an important geo-strategic European region and one that recently committed fully to a path of increased political stability, economic progress and sustainable development, with strengthened cooperation, security characterized by good relations with its neighbours, and peace consolidation. The European route is the best guarantee for achieving these objectives in our region.

We are committed to resolving various bilateral issues as soon as possible, in the interests of our people and our neighbourly relations. We are fully aware that we must enact a number of measures to eradicate corruption and organized crime. Like every country in the region, we have expressed our willingness to conduct joint reforms that will bring increased economic stability and prosperity for our citizens and that will open markets and attract foreign investment.

The Republic of Kosovo is one of the members of our Western Balkan community, the youngest State in the region. In less than six years as an independent State, Kosovo has managed, through a transformative development agenda, to enjoy wide, uninterrupted international recognition and to successfully integrate into international, regional and global organizations, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the European Bank for Development, the Venice Commission, the South-East European Cooperation Process and others. Kosovo has become an important factor for peace and stability in the region, and Albania fully supports its overall development, as well as its stability and territorial integrity within its current borders.

Kosovo's progress, the new atmosphere in the region, and the need for the region as a whole to move towards more cooperation and prosperity have led down the path to successful European Union-sponsored talks between Kosovo and Serbia as two equal partners in seeking concrete solutions to technical issues of importance to their citizens. Time has shown that engaging in dialogue was a wise decision. Dialogue has produced concrete results, brought the two countries closer to each other, and facilitated and sped up the European Union integration path for both States. Albania fully supports the process of dialogue and calls for the full implementation of the agreements reached.

To date, Kosovo has been recognized by 108 States Members of the United Nations, representing more than half of the United Nations membership. Recognition has without doubt been an important factor in Kosovo's progress. That is why, as before, we call on the countries that have not yet recognized Kosovo to do so, since in so doing they would not only help the people of Kosovo advance towards their future but also contribute to peace and stability in the region.

Mr. Masood Khan (Pakistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We remain convinced that the quick and full implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement represents a condition indispensable to the sustainable stability of Macedonia, to the consolidation of democracy and the rule of law, and to fulfilling and realizing the rights of Albanians. Albania encourages the continuation of dialogue between the Belgrade authorities and the Albanians of the Presheva valley to

promote their rights in accordance with international standards, focusing especially on solving economic, social, educational and cultural problems.

During the past two decades, Albania has been transformed from a totalitarian State into a functioning democracy. Progress is evident, above all, in the field of human rights. The protection and promotion of human rights are one of the national priorities and part of Albania's foreign policy. Albania offers a valuable model of respect for diversity, tolerance and coexistence for the Balkan region and beyond. For the Albanian people, tolerance and hospitality are inherent values derived from our national tradition.

The presentation of Albania's candidacy for membership on the Human Rights Council for the 2015-2017 term is only a logical consequence of our road towards building a society based on human rights. We are confident that Albania has accumulated valuable experience in democracy over the years that it can share with other member countries of the United Nations. Moreover, by reaffirming the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of human rights, Albania is committed to bringing a national and regional perspective into the Council's deliberations and advocacy of human rights worldwide.

We are aware that our membership in the Council for the 2015-2017 term is a challenge bearing great responsibility to justify the confidence of Member States. On the other hand, Human Rights Council membership would serve as an impetus for my country to further democratization and to raise human rights standards. Therefore, Albania, after obtaining the endorsement of the group of Eastern European States, would welcome and appreciate the support of all other Member States for its candidacy to the Council.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate Albania's determination to continue its support of the United Nations agenda and strengthening the role of the United Nations globally.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Albania for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Bujar Nishani, President of the Republic of Albania, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. János Áder, President of Hungary

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of Hungary.

Mr. János Áder, President of Hungary, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. János Áder, President of Hungary, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Áder (*spoke in Hungarian; interpretation provided by the delegation*): "If you seek peace, prepare for war." Those are the words of Publius Flavius Vegetius Renatus' fourth- or fifth-century tract *De Re Militari*, written more than 1,600 years ago. People have quoted that saying numerous times and in many circumstances. If the Assembly believes after all this that I am going to speak about the wars and armed conflicts raging throughout the world, it is mistaken. Instead, I would like to speak to the Assembly about a war and a battle that we seem to be losing. It is a war we are waging against our own natural environment and against our own human nature.

Two days ago here in the General Assembly Hall, many heard the words of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and President Obama about the dire consequences of climate change (see A/69/PV.6). We heard very detailed statistics illustrating the gravity of the situation and the need for us to pool our efforts. And we have been preparing for that for a long time.

When did we first notice signs of trouble with the environment? Few people may know that the first clear signal came in 1896, when a Swedish scientist wrote that an increase in the atmospheric level of carbon dioxide would lead to a temperature rise; 60 years later, we had precise measurements to substantiate his statement. Another 30 years had to pass before here, in the United Nations, it was understood that some type of treaty or agreement would be necessary in the future to deal with the issue. Another 10 years had to pass before the Kyoto Protocol was signed. Between the first realization and the Kyoto agreement a century had passed.

After Kyoto, a number of conferences, scientific meetings and political gatherings were held. In recent decades, many people have spoken on many occasions about the consequences of climate change and the need to do something. Still the situation has continued to deteriorate. Let me cite one statistic. Since 1990 — that

is, during the past 25 years — despite all the resolve, the Kyoto agreement and all the promises, we have seen a 30 per cent increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide.

Despite the fact that Mother Nature has warned us again and again, adverse climate events continue to occur one after the other. Allow me to mention a few examples from the past year. In 2013 in the state of Uttar Pradesh in India, there were freezing temperatures in January, which was unprecedented. At the same time, in Lapland in Finland — not exactly the Mediterranean region — in May the temperature had reached 31°C, while Bethlehem experienced a white Christmas that no one remembered having seen before. In Australia, over the course of 90 days last summer, 123 temperature records were set.

The Danube is the largest river in Europe and it has warned us again and again. Allow me to report a Hungarian example. Since before the Second World War, the Danube River has flooded many times, but until recently it had never risen to the level of 8 metres, even at the flood's highest point. In the past four years, the Danube has risen above 8 metres on four separate occasions. In fact last year, it rose close to 9 metres.

Floods, typhoons and other adverse meteorological events are taking place in regions where they have never occurred before and at unprecedented times of the year. We are meeting here in New York. Two years ago here in New York, Hurricane Sandy caused damage valued at $20 billion, and more than 40 people died. This all took place despite the fact that for years on end the New York City leadership had been cautioned by scientists that trouble would occur and that protection for embankments, among others, must be strengthened. A few hundred million dollars would have been spent to that end; instead, the damage caused by Sandy cost far more. That is why, two days ago, the Assembly heard the Mayor of New York speak of the next 35 years and the desire to reduce New York's emissions by 80 per cent.

In recent days, we have spoken on many occasions about our preparations for the 2015 Paris conference and the desire to reach an agreement there. I believe that Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon needs to be recognized in that regard. He has truly done his utmost to ensure that we can reach a common conclusion in Paris in 2015. The question is, are we Member States doing all we can? Will we do all that we can to ensure success in Paris?

The speeches I have heard over the past few days have not made me optimistic. The speeches I have heard deflected responsibility and reflected a type of political narrow-mindedness that is not terribly promising. Why can we not listen to the wisdom and advice of our scientists? Why can we not accept scientific results that today appear evident? Why can we not accept the signals being dispatched by our planet? Why can we not learn from all of the lessons provided by Mother Nature? Why are we not learning from our own example?

There is one good example that we could learn from. It involves chlorofluorocarbon gases and the damage they cause to the ozone layer. Basically, those gases were first used in the 1950s. It took only 30 years for the ozone layer to be reduced by 40 per cent in the area above Antarctica. That was also enough time for people in every country to understand the medical consequences. I note, among others, the high incidence of dermatological cancers. It was basically only at the very last moment in Montreal that an agreement was struck, as a result of which we banned those gases. After 35 years, last week we saw the first report discussing a regeneration of the ozone layer.

Regarding political narrow-mindedness, we saw examples of that in the past. I will cite one. United States President Reagan's Secretary of the Interior, Donald Hodel, said that one way to protect against the thinning ozone layer was to purchase wide-brim hats and wear dark sunglasses. Why must we wait for the concentration of atmospheric carbon dioxide to result in a situation as serious as that involving the ozone layer? Why can we not, late next year, make Paris as successful as Montreal?

I believe that the problem is larger than we imagine. Scientists already agree that the desired and often articulated objective of limiting the temperature increase to 2°C has become increasingly elusive. Only a few days ago, we read that the carbon dioxide concentration has never been higher than it was last year. We may well have reached the point at which, whether or not we come to an agreement today or tomorrow, scientists will tell us that all the consequences of irresponsible decisions past and present would still be felt in the future in the form of floods, typhoons and other adverse climate events.

We have to come to terms with the idea — and I would say that it will be very difficult — that the coming generation, our children's generation, will

unfortunately have to live with that situation. We will have to pay a dear price for our irresponsible environmental policies.

Today it is no longer enough to reduce emissions. It is no longer enough to agree to reduce emissions. We have to prepare for more and more serious natural events and disasters. We have to heed the advice of Nicholas Stern, who said eight years ago that if we did not spend 1 per cent of our gross domestic product (GDP) on prevention, then the environmental damage we would suffer could amount to as much as 20 per cent of GDP.

I have just cited the example of New York City. A few hundred million dollars would have been enough to mitigate damages totaling several billion. The New York example tells us that we are not in the twenty-fourth hour, but in the twenty-fifth. The tragedy endured by this metropolis, the host of our meeting, again justifies the words of Vegetius, somewhat amended to the situation — if you seek calm, prepare for disaster.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of Hungary for the statement he has just made.

Mr. János Áder, President of Hungary, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.

United Nations A/69/PV.11

General Assembly

Official Records

Sixty-ninth session

11th plenary meeting
Thursday, 25 September 2014, 6 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kutesa ..... (Uganda)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Masood Khan (Pakistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 6.20 p.m.

Address by Mr. Arthur Peter Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Malawi.

Mr. Arthur Peter Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Arthur Peter Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Mutharika: Allow me to begin by congratulating Mr. Sam Kutesa on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. I have no doubt that his election at this juncture will bring to the notice of the world some of the problems and opportunities that exist in Africa. Malawi and Uganda have enjoyed cordial relations for a long time and my Government and my delegation will do all we can to support him in that very important position.

Let me also take the opportunity to congratulate his predecessor, Ambassador John William Ashe, for guiding the work of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly with skill and pragmatism. I would also like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for the steady manner in which he continues to guide our global Organization.

On 20 May, my country held its first ever tripartite elections, which enabled Malawians to choose their political leadership through a democratic and peaceful process. The elections ushered me into office as the fifth President of the Republic of Malawi. I would therefore like to inform the Assembly that, despite a few challenges, the elections were free, fair, transparent and credible. In that vein, let me seize the opportunity to thank all the electoral stakeholders, both local and international, for their dedication to ensuring successful elections in my country. Malawi has come out of the election much stronger than before.

On 6 July, Malawi commemorated the golden jubilee of its independence. As we commemorate the 50 years of peace, law and order, we have tasked ourselves with taking stock of the development that the country has registered since 1964, as well as the challenges that the country faces today. Much of the country has made some progress in diverse sectors of our national development, but there is still more to be done in order to uplift the living standards of the many Malawians who continue to remain below the poverty line. They too dream of a better future, which is possible only if we work with unity of purpose. In a quest to take development to the micro level, my Government has embarked on a journey to transform Malawi so as to ensure the delivery of satisfactory services to Malawians, especially the poor and the marginalized.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506. Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

14-54929 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

As the Assembly is aware, Malawi was the chair of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) from August 2013 until August 2014. During our term of office, we strove as a region to achieve long-lasting peace and stability in our countries. In that vein, let me commend my country, Malawi, and the countries of Madagascar and South Africa for holding peaceful and credible elections.

The SADC group has been undertaking a number of efforts aimed at ending the cycle of conflicts and violence in the region. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, SADC deployed the Force Intervention Brigade, comprising troops from Malawi, South Africa and Tanzania, under the auspices of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as authorized under Security Council resolution 2098 (2013). The SADC group, as well as the international community, is pleased with the success achieved in getting the Mouvement du 23 mars and other negative forces to leave the country and surrender. In Madagascar, SADC played a crucial role in bringing back constitutional normalcy in the country.

In terms of international peace and security, I would like to inform this gathering that Malawi has always supported the disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction. To that end, we have supported resolutions in the General Assembly aimed at nuclear disarmament. Over and above that, a couple of months ago, my country held an in-country workshop to come up with mechanisms to implement Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) at the national level to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery.

On the same subject, in the Middle East, Malawi has always been disheartened and disappointed by the continuing violence and loss of life and property resulting from the conflict between Israel and Palestine. That cannot go on forever. We trust that the two-State solution to the conflict, with Israel and Palestine living side by side, in peace and harmony, is the only viable way to achieve lasting peace in the region. We encourage both sides to the dispute to renounce violence, exercise utmost restraint and employ dialogue as the sure tool to reach a political settlement.

As for the post-2015 development agenda, the choice of "Delivering on and implementing a transformative post-2015 development agenda" as the theme for the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly could not be more appropriate. The fight against poverty, hunger and inequality constitutes the greatest challenge of our time. The theme further augurs well for the future in relation to the plans and aspirations of the people of Malawi.

Malawi appreciates the consultative nature of the process followed in designing the post-2015 development agenda. Let me therefore commend the Secretary-General's initiatives to ensure an inclusive process that will lead to the post-2015 development agenda. With financial and technical support from the United Nations, more than 50 countries have conducted national consultations, in which people provided input and direction on the post-2015 development framework. I am pleased that Malawi was one of the countries selected for those national consultations. The post-2015 development agenda should reflect the needs and priorities of the developing world.

It is important that the next global development agenda draw lessons from the successes and challenges of the current blueprint being used, namely, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Rather than seeing 2015 as an end point, we must think of it as the beginning of a new era, an era in which we eradicate extreme poverty, protect the environment and promote economic opportunity for all. The MDGs have played an important role in concentrating our efforts around the common purpose of eradicating poverty. They have raised public awareness about the unacceptable levels of poverty and have helped mobilize action towards a fairer world. The MDGs provided a common framework for monitoring progress, highlighting areas of achievement as well as challenges.

Malawi is on track for achieving four of the eight MDGs, namely, reducing child mortality; combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability; and developing a global partnership for development. However, we are unlikely to meet the other four goals, namely, eradicating extreme poverty and hunger; achieving universal access to education; ensuring gender equality and the empowerment of women; and improving maternal health. Malawi will therefore be proceeding to the post-2015 development agenda with unfinished business from the MDGs.

One reason why developing countries like Malawi have failed to achieve all of the Millennium Development Goals is inadequate resources. Commitments made by development partners have been unpredictable and have often gone unfulfilled. To achieve delivery of the

post-2015 development agenda, the global community should not repeat that mistake. More importantly, accountability and transparency, as well as monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, should be promoted. It is therefore imperative that, as we move closer to welcoming the new global development agenda, we should all be mindful of the importance of global partnership for effective development cooperation. That would ensure the agenda's successful implementation in developing countries.

The post-2015 development agenda should not be seen as a one-size-fits-all global development framework. Malawi is looking forward to a framework that is shared, but differentiated enough, where developing countries, depending on their special needs and unique characteristics, will have flexibility in implementing programmes. My delegation is pleased with the tremendous progress made thus far in defining the post-2015 development agenda. It is in that context that I would like to reiterate and confirm Malawi's commitment to achieving sustainable development in three interconnected dimensions, namely, economic development, including the end of extreme poverty; social inclusion; and environmental sustainability.

I am convinced that Member States gathered here today will own the outcome document of the post-2015 development agenda and will be committed to its full implementation. It is also encouraging to note that the sustainable development goals that emanated from the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals have incorporated the development concerns of both the developed and developing world.

With respect to Security Council reform, the year 2015 will mark, as the General Assembly is aware, the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations. As such, it will be an occasion for all of us to bring new energy into the Organization and carry out the important reforms that we have been calling for since its inception. For instance, the limited representation in the Security Council is a source of great concern, particularly in the light of the challenges of the twenty-first century. Only by expanding the number of permanent and non-permanent members of the Council and by including developing countries in both categories will we be able to solve some of the legitimacy deficits under which the Council is currently labouring.

In conclusion, I would submit that the centre of the post-2015 development agenda should be to address the plight of hitherto disadvantaged groups, such as women, girls and persons with disabilities. It is a well-known fact that the ugly face of poverty manifests itself through women, girls and persons with disabilities. It is sad that Africa, the continent to which Malawi belongs, shares the following worrisome statistics in terms of human development. First, its share of global poverty is as high as 30 per cent. Secondly, 40 per cent of the continent's children under 5 are stunted in their growth. Thirdly, Africa's share of global child mortality amounts to 50 per cent. Finally, 50 per cent of Africa's children are not in school.

I urge that the post-2015 development agenda give priority to those challenges for redress. Africa has already spoken clearly about its priorities through the Common African Position on the post-2015 development agenda and through the African Union's Agenda 2063, which aspires to achieve a prosperous, peaceful and integrated Africa.

In that vein, I wish to call on all stakeholders to join the global partnership for effective development cooperation principles by implementing and delivering on a transformative post-2015 development agenda. Malawi will use its position as Chair of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation to help realize that cause.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Malawi for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Arthur Peter Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Baron Divavesi Waqa, President of the Republic of Nauru

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Nauru.

Mr. Baron Divavesi Waqa, President of the Republic of Nauru, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Baron Divavesi Waqa, President of the Republic of Nauru, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Waqa: Allow me to congratulate Mr. Sam Kutesa on his assumption of the presidency

of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. Let me assure him of my delegation's full support and cooperation as he steers our work during this session. I must also commend his predecessor, Ambassador John Ashe, for showing such capable leadership during the previous session. He led the small island developing States (SIDS) through several important milestones during his tenure, including the International Year of Small Island Developing States and the recently concluded International Conference on SIDS in Samoa.

It has been said that the stars are aligned with SIDS this year. Ambassador Ashe has been our brightest beacon, and I thank him very much for that. Let me also thank another champion of the SIDS, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. Indeed, earlier this year, I sat in the Trusteeship Council Chamber when the Secretary-General helped us celebrate the launch of the International Year of Small Island Developing States. Showing a remarkable understanding of our unique circumstances, he said:

> "The International Year offers us the opportunity to celebrate the rich cultural heritage of the people of small island developing States and to honour their many contributions to our world. It is also an opportunity to highlight the various needs and challenges of this diverse coalition. Some small island developing States have enjoyed long-lasting stability. Others are in transition. Some are economically more fragile than others... Others are extremely vulnerable to the immediate effects of climate change. But all small island developing States share a common understanding. We need to set our world on a sustainable path."

The challenges of SIDS are many. One need only glance at the headlines to appreciate that they join a long list of concerns that the international community must confront today: naked brutality, pestilence, poverty and the worsening impacts of climate change, to name only a few. I understand the impulse for us to put off hard decisions to another day, prioritize some over others, or even bury our heads in the sand. But the General Assembly is and remains the pre-eminent forum for grappling with global crises, and the United Nations is our best hope for solving them.

However, if we are to be successful, we must acknowledge a reality that lies beneath so many of those challenges, namely, that we live in an interconnected world and that the actions of one country or region impact the lives of people half a world away. Conflict, poverty and disease can send refugees across borders and oceans and sometimes all the way to our shores. We can no longer escape each other. As the Secretary-General also remarked, we all share the same island.

Also, we must consider my country's connection to the ocean. As for so many SIDS, the ocean is the foundation of our culture and economy, and we depend on its bounty for food and income. Yet the reckless actions of other nations have severely undermined the marine environment on which we so depend — from excessive greenhouse gas emissions that warm the planet and make the seas more and more acidic to irresponsible overfishing, the outright stealing of fish in our waters, and dangerous pollution, the effect of which we have yet to fully comprehend.

All the while, some of those same countries responsible for the damage are also charged with assessing the well-being of the marine environment. How can we be confident that our interests will be protected in that effort? We, as a developing country, are constantly facing demands for greater transparency and accountability from the same actors that downplay, and sometimes even cover up, their own transgressions.

Finding lasting solutions to problems such as those will require more resources and a level of cooperation that the international community has so far not countenanced. It will also require us to look at the failings in the global order that somehow prevent countries such as mine from accessing the fair economic benefits of our own resources. Nevertheless, we cannot just stand by and do nothing. We cannot and should not wait for others to decide what is best for us. For that reason, the parties to the Nauru Agreement are taking the lead in successfully managing their tuna stocks through such measures as curbing illegal fishing and sustainable harvesting.

The President has wisely chosen "Delivering on and implementing a transformative post-2015 development agenda" as the theme of the general debate of the sixty-ninth session. It goes to the heart of the central task before us — not only fulfilling the long-standing promises with regard to sustainable development but also engendering a paradigm shift in the way that we achieve such development. The current piecemeal approach, where a donor's political interests determine aid priorities, may treat symptoms for a time, but it fails to address the underlying disease.

If we want our efforts to be successful over the long term, we need to build a foundation that develops global citizens and gives them the tools they need to succeed in a global world. In other words, we must move beyond capacity-building to institution-building. What is needed is long-term in-country engagement, backed by real resources, that produces durable domestic institutions run by nationals. We cannot let new and emerging issues distract or diminish work on core priorities that remain inadequately addressed. We may be experiencing our own fatigue when we again raise the issues of overfishing, climate adaptation and water treatment, but those are often the areas most in need of attention.

I know that tackling all of those problems will be a tall order and may seem quite daunting, I am absolutely confident that this institution and its agencies are up to the task. We have made some progress in reducing hunger, poverty and disease. And just this week, the world watched as leaders gathered at the Climate Summit to announce the actions that their countries and corporations are planning in order to lower greenhouse gas emissions responsible for the climate crisis. The Summit provided hope that, at least in some corners, serious climate action is imminent. However, it was hard to ignore the fact that most announcements were about the greenhouse gas reductions that would occur under some future Government a decade or more in the future.

What is more, SIDS, which contribute only a fraction of global emissions, have undertaken to build sustainable economies while announcing some of the most ambitious pledges to cut emissions. For example, we are working closely with the International Renewable Energy Agency, through their Lighthouses initiative, to achieve our own goal of a 50 per cent reduction in 2020. My own regional group, the Pacific SIDS, led the General Assembly to formally recognize the connection between climate change and international peace and security in 2009 and helped convince the Security Council to do the same in 2011.

But, while few countries doubt the correlation between climate change and conflict today and despite graphic examples of such in the past few years alone, there is still disagreement as to the way forward. Therefore, we are still of the opinion that the Secretary-General should appoint a special representative on climate and security to analyse the projected security impacts of the crisis. In addition, the Secretary-General should lead a joint task force of all relevant organs and specialized agencies to assess the capacity of the United Nations system to respond. That is the least we can do as an international body to prepare for one of the biggest challenges of our generation.

If the Security Council is to remain relevant, it must be adaptive enough to meet the latest threats, and climate change is a clear and present danger that we ignore at our own peril. The Security Council must also reflect new geopolitical realities by becoming more representative and inclusive. It is for that reason that Nauru supports the reform of the Security Council by enlarging its permanent and non-permanent categories and making its working methods more efficient. New members should be more geographically diverse, but they must also be willing to broaden their vision beyond a narrow focus on domestic interests to include a commitment to the common good of all Member States.

Similarly, the United Nations should ensure that all citizens of the world have the opportunity to participate in its activities. It must work for the 10,000 people in Nauru and other small countries, and it must not continue to ignore the 24 million people in Taiwan, who time and again have demonstrated a commitment to peace and regional cooperation. Nauru is pleased to note that, with solid international support and the cross-Strait rapprochement, the Republic of China has increased its meaningful participation in United Nations specialized agencies and mechanisms. We continue to encourage the positive interaction between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait in the international arena. Furthermore, I would like to recognize the contributions that Taiwan has made to help my country make progress towards its national sustainable development strategy. I take the opportunity to also express my country's deep appreciation to our friends and partners who continue to support our sustainable development priorities, including Australia, Russia, New Zealand, the European Union, Cuba, Israel and Turkey, to mention a few.

The world is rapidly changing, and the new realities have strained the ability of the United Nations to respond adequately. Long-term solutions will require a new commitment to providing adequate means of implementation. On climate change alone, we are far from the goal of providing $100 billion a year by 2020 to help nations adapt to climate impacts that are now unavoidable and to build sources of clean energy, to say

nothing of the 0.7 per cent gross domestic product goal for development aid.

I know that we, as an international community, face numerous crises on many fronts and that much is being asked of us. But I strongly believe that it is in times like these that solutions to even the most intractable problems emerge from the human spirit. It is in times like these that light emerges from darkness; hope from despair.

The small island developing States have laid out a vision to help us reach our full potential. I invite our partners to invest in our peoples, and we will build a better and more secure world. The United Nations remains our best hope for people everywhere to live in peace and prosperity. My faith in it has never been stronger. God bless the Republic of Nauru and God bless the United Nations.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Nauru for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Baron Divavesi Waqa, President of the Republic of Nauru, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Tommy Esang Remengesau Jr., President of the Republic of Palau

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Palau.

Mr. Tommy Esang Remengesau Jr., President of the Republic of Palau, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Tommy Esang Remengesau Jr., President of the Republic of Palau, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Remengesau: Without trying to be melodramatic, I believe that my country, the Pacific region and the world have reached a crossroads. In this International Year of Small Island Developing States, leading up to the climate change negotiations at the twentieth and twenty-first Conferences of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the third International Conference on Financing for Development and the impending adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, viewed within the context of our rising oceans, the Ebola crisis in Africa and the apparent societal inferno in progress in the Arab world, we find our societies, our cultures and our economies under serious attack, never before experienced on so many fronts. We can continue business as usual along our current course and wait for the horizons to clear the global haze or we can choose a different road, one that will give our critical habitats the chance to recover and thereby ensure their continued ability to sustain us. Am I a foolish dreamer or a simple pragmatist? I guess that only time will tell.

However, I will say one thing. My country, small as it is, will not go down without a fight, using every available tool, nor will the Pacific region, whose people comprehend first-hand the real and current impacts of climate change and recognize that their oceans are becoming polluted and their fish stocks depleted. That is why the Pacific leaders at this year's Pacific Islands Forum supported the Palau Declaration under the theme "The ocean: life and future". Within that theme and Declaration, the Pacific leaders highlighted the fact that, in order to survive, we will have to continue to play a central role in the stewardship of one of the greatest endowments of the world — the Pacific Ocean. That is because, in our short lifetime, we have experienced a dangerous combination of human impacts that threaten the foundation of our Pacific livelihoods.

That is why we have called on the global community to support the efforts of the Forum countries to sustainably use their ocean resources and to conserve their valuable underwater heritage. That is why Palau, Kiribati, the Cook Islands, New Caledonia, the United States of America, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands are currently in the process of declaring and establishing protected marine areas of different sizes and requirements to reverse the current trends of overuse and overexploitation and thereby ensure a healthy ocean for our children.

That is why we are committed to ensuring the launch of negotiations by September 2015 for an international agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction. That is why we are calling upon the United Nations to ensure a stand-alone sustainable development goal (SDG) on oceans.

However, while we are strongly in favour of that critical SDG, we are concerned that the post-2015 development dialogue may be too broad. We must

remember that an agenda of everything is effectively an agenda of nothing. Above all, our goals and targets must be realistic, practical, simple, transparent and measurable. In that context, we must continue to focus on the vulnerable countries and the people most in need. To accomplish that objective, we must recognize that one size does not fit all and that we must continue to concentrate on a common but differentiated response.

Our international community has years of experience of what does and does not work with our Millennium Development Goals. It is now time to complete the work on the remaining half and to continue to improve both the level and the responsiveness of our financing mechanisms. We must also ensure that the bulk of the financing reaches those that need it most and that their share is not a mere drop in the bucket.

In the Pacific, we believe action must begin in one's own backyard. In my country, in the next several months, we will formalize the establishment of a national marine sanctuary, which will include a complete prohibition on purse seine fishing that covers 100 per cent of the exclusive economic zone (EEZ), a "no-take" marine sanctuary that covers 80 per cent of the Palau EEZ; a highly regulated fishing zone that covers approximately 20 per cent of the EEZ and will provide for Palau's domestic fishing needs alone; and a prohibition on commercial fish exports. Through our global actions and our partnerships between developing and developed nations and between the private and the public sectors, we can achieve a transformational shift in the way we think about the use of our Earth's natural assets. By recognizing the ocean as a joint and primary asset of every citizen on our planet, we can move towards the global management of our global ocean exclusive economic zone.

Mr. Aslov (Tajikistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We must never shift from the need for a global climate change initiative that addresses the threat to all people of all nations. Climate change is our planet's silent war. It must not remain on the back pages of our minds and our global commitments. We must move it to the front page, alongside global conflicts, so that it receives the attention and the financing that it deserves. And we must understand that, in terms of public health, climate change is a defining issue for our century.

Climate change affects the air that we breathe, the food that we eat, the water that we drink and the infectious diseases that find their way into our homes. Our world leaders, whether from developed or developing countries, must overcome the failures of our own lost generation. As the Secretary-General said, the race is on, and now is the time for leaders to step up and steer the world towards a safer future. A temperature increase of 3.6 degrees is simply not acceptable. If that is the best objective that our global leaders can agree on, we may as well throw in the towel and stop having children, because there will be no future for them.

By the end of 2015, our global leaders must announce a new direction with new and realistic commitments and practical actions, supported by a greatly enhanced financial commitment both to mitigation and to adaptation. Those commitments must include the ratification of the second amendment to the Kyoto Protocol. Within our discussions, migration should not be an option. As the young mother Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner from the Marshall Islands put it so beautifully on Tuesday, "No one is moving. No one is losing their homeland. No one is becoming a climate change refugee".

Our small island nations, which are the first to feel the impacts of climate change, the first to feel the impacts of diminished marine resources and the first to wet our feet in sea-level rise, are ready and willing to lead. We do not call for action from developed nations that we are not willing to take ourselves. Last year, my country committed, under the Majuro Declaration for Climate Leadership, to a 20 per cent contribution of renewable energy to the energy mix and a 30 per cent reduction in energy consumption by 2020. We are well on the way to achieving those goals.

Since its independence, Palau has been blessed with strong partnerships. For over 50 years, the United States has provided its support and friendship. Without its support to Palau's transition, revenue independence and infrastructure development, we would not be where we are today. Palau stands strongly behind the United States in its ongoing efforts to guide the international response to the horrific situation in Syria and Iraq and its actions to respond to the threat of the Islamic State in Iraq and Sham. Let us not forget that global peace and stability are critical if we are to achieve our development agenda and respond to the issues of climate change and ocean regeneration.

We wish to give special thanks for President Obama's support for oceans and the expressed intent to set aside 10 per cent of our global oceans as marine

protected areas. Finally, we thank the United States for past and future technical and financial assistance in our efforts to implement our National Marine Sanctuary. We continue to look forward to finally completing our Compact of Free Association agreement, which reflects this close and special relationship.

Palau would also like to acknowledge the very significant economic support that we have received over the years from our good friend, Japan. We are hopeful that the Security Council expansion and reform process will result in Japan's permanent membership on the Security Council. We also are hopeful that Japan will continue to support and enhance public and private assistance to our exclusive economic zone surveillance efforts and our continued efforts to develop our National Marine Sanctuary.

In addition, Palau would like to thank the Republic of China on Taiwan for its friendship and economic support in assisting Palau to achieve our Millennium Development Goals and would urge the United Nations system to involve Taiwan in the process of developing and implementing the post-2015 development agenda. I would also call upon the United Nations to support Taiwan's broader participation in the United Nations specialized agencies and regional economic integration mechanisms, as its participation in the World Health Assembly, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership would demonstrate its ability to contribute to global and regional initiatives.

We also would like to express our thanks to the Australian Government for its ongoing partnership, its annual aid assistance focused on education and its commitment to providing $2 billion to the Pacific region to replace its aging marine surveillance fleet.

Finally, we would like to recognize the very broad list of partners around the globe that make our efforts to ensure a sustainable future possible, including New Zealand, the European Union, private organizations, non-governmental organizations and civil society. Partnerships such as those are commitments. We would not be where we are today without them. In the post-2015 development environment, we must all recognize that our actions as individuals, States, nations and regions have an impact on all our partners on planet Earth. If we are to save our oceans and if we are to stem the tide of greenhouse gases, we must establish a long-lasting system of global partnerships and respect.

At the end of the day, we must recognize that some of us are developed and some of us are not. The means of implementation in terms of oceans, climate change, biodiversity and all of the other issues that require global solutions are therefore a recurring and central issue. Without effective partnerships, change will simply not occur, and without legally binding commitments with respect toour oceans and climate change, we will not make the transformative changes that we need to make in the next generation.

As a small island developing State and a member of the Pacific community, I am ready, willing and able to commit to doing my share. I am even willing to lead. But let us not fool ourselves. The only way to make a difference in this modem global era is to go beyond our self-centred mentality. By standing together, we can indeed craft a sustainable future for our children and for generations to come.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Palau for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Tommy Esang Remengesau Jr., President of the Republic of Palau, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Mr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Kikwete: I congratulate my brother Sam Kutesa of the Republic of Uganda on his well-deserved election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. While wishing him every success in the discharge of his duties and responsibilities, my delegation and I promise him our full support

and cooperation. Allow me also to pay tribute to his predecessor, Mr. John Ashe of Antigua and Barbuda, for his remarkable leadership of the Assembly at its sixty-eighth session.

Our illustrious Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon deserves praise and appreciation for his leadership and the good work he is doing for our esteemed Organization. He has been performing his duty with courage, dedication, passion and commitment in driving the United Nations agenda. We will always be grateful to him.

We welcome and fully endorse the theme of this year's debate, "Delivering on and implementing a transformative post-2015 development agenda". We expect the discussion on it to make important contributions in the intergovernmental negotiations about to start on the post-2015 development goals. As we dedicate our time and effort to the negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda, we must not lose sight of the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It is important that any unaccomplished targets and indicators should be properly factored into the new agenda. In the meantime, we should ensure that we use the remaining 461 days to accelerate the pace of implementing the MDGs.

The issue of financing the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda must be given special attention. I am mentioning this matter because experience has taught us that, other factors aside, we will fall short of attaining a number of the MDG targets and indicators because of unpredictable, unreliable, insufficient and untimely availability of financial resources. Therefore, for the post-2015 development agenda to be achieved, we must devise a mechanism to ensure stable, predictable and reliable sources of finance for their implementation.

There is more to the year 2015 than the deadline for the MDGs and the onset of the post-2015 sustainable development goals. The year 2015 is also a deadline for the world to conclude a legally binding climate change agreement. We thank the Secretary-General for convening the Climate Summit that took place on 23 September, here at the United Nations. It afforded us a unique opportunity to put our minds together and deliberate on ways to save this planet from disaster and advance on clean development pathways. It was very opportune, indeed, to hold the Summit two months before the twentieth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP-20), which is due to be held in Lima in December 2014, and one year before COP-21, to be held in Paris next year. In many ways, the Summit may help to make the work in Peru less difficult. As members know, a successful Lima Conference will mean a lot in terms of the Paris Conference, where we expect to conclude a legally binding climate agreement. We know it is not easy, but Tanzania and Africa as a whole are appealing to all countries from all continents to do whatever it takes to ensure that COP-21 delivers on the expectations all of us have. Failure should not be an option.

United Nations reforms are long overdue. Reports that consultations and negotiations are not showing encouraging signs of progress are very frustrating indeed. We should remain steadfast and vigilant and not allow the momentum to be lost. We humbly request the President of the Assembly to use his good offices and long-standing diplomatic skills to revitalize the process and keep it on track. We must keep the flame burning.

Global peace and security are in a state of flux. The events occurring in North Africa, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa are matters of concern to all of us. Equally important is the menace of terrorism; the illicit exploitation of natural resources; poaching; and the illicit trade in narcotic drugs and weapons, which are making the world less secure.

Terrorism is assuming new dimensions, making it a huge threat today because of its indiscriminate, lethal and callous character. Hundreds of innocent people have lost their lives or been abducted, with fatal consequences. No country is insulated from this menace, and nobody is safe. As such, it calls for all of us to play an active role in the fight against terrorism and cross-border crime. Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham and other terrorist organizations should not be allowed to have their way. Libya should not be left to disintegrate. The senseless fighting in the Central African Republic and South Sudan must be brought to an end. This world, under the leadership of the Security Council and regional organizations, has the capacity to do exactly that. Let us do what is required of us to stop the bloodshed, loss of life, suffering of innocent people and destruction of property.

The horrifying scenes of bombings and the deaths of innocent women, children and men in the recent hostilities between Israel and Palestine are

heartbreaking. Unfortunately, the conflict has been going on for far too long, despite the fact that the lasting solution is known: two States, living side by side harmoniously. That solution has been elusive. The time has now come for the United Nations, the United States of America, Russia, Europe and other global and regional Powers to come together in concerted efforts to make it happen. We should not wait any longer.

As regards the question of Western Sahara, let me reiterate the appeal I made last year to the Security Council to do everything in its power to resolve that problem once and for all. Honestly, I cannot comprehend why that problem, which began around the same time as that in East Timor, nearly 40 years ago, should remain unresolved to this day. What are the insurmountable challenges impeding the United Nations from ending the impasse? I ask the United Nations to please do what is needed and put the Sahrawi question to rest. I know it can.

Once again, we in Tanzania wish to join others who spoke before us in calling for an end to the sanctions and embargo against Cuba and its people. For over 50 years, the embargo has condemned the people of Cuba, including innocent children and women, to perpetual hardship and poverty. It is high time that the embargo be lifted and the people of Cuba given the opportunity to live in dignity like everybody else on this planet.

This session of the General Assembly is being held at a time when our brothers and sisters in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea are confronting the worst outbreak of the deadly Ebola epidemic to date. In those three countries, together with Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, some 2,400 people have lost their lives. The disease, which has no cure or vaccine as yet, presents a major threat to the countries where the disease is known to exist, but also to neighbouring countries and beyond. Unless the world succeeds in controlling the spread of this disease, there is every likelihood that it will become a global epidemic.

Our collective efforts in that regard are the best way forward. I believe the world has the technology, knowledge and financial resources that, if put together, can defeat the threat posed by Ebola. We should also continue to support the efforts of the world's scientists, who are working tirelessly, day and night, in search of a cure and a vaccine. We applaud the efforts being undertaken by the United Nations, the World Health Organization, the United States Government and other countries with the necessary technical and technological capabilities to assist the affected countries and wage the fight against the disease worldwide

We request four things. First, we must continue and, where possible, bolster that support until the spread of the disease is under control. Secondly, we must continue to assist other nations in West Africa and elsewhere on the African continent in building their capacities for surveillance, isolation and treatment. Thirdly, we must intensify our efforts to develop a cure and a vaccine to save the lives of those infected now and to prevent others from being infected. Fourthly and finally, we must help Africa; we must help African nations so that the stigma that is developing against Africa because of Ebola is stopped.

Reports that a number of people from other continents are now shying away from coming to Africa and are cancelling travel plans because of Ebola are disturbing. That is threatening to kill the all-important tourism industry, trade and investment flows to Africa. May the United Nations and friends of Africa please help us to tell the world that Africa is a continent of 54 countries, not a country of 54 provinces. Not all countries in Africa have the disease. Moreover, many countries are far away from the concerned countries in West Africa. In fact, the affected countries are closer to Europe than they are to Kenya, Tanzania or South Africa in eastern and southern Africa, to mention but a few. As a matter of fact, they are 9 to 11 hours away by air from those countries. To cancel travel to our parts of Africa is incomprehensible and a gross injustice to the continent.

I am confident that this seven-day debate on the theme "Delivering on and implementing a transformative post-2015 development agenda" affords us another opportunity to define a bright future for ourselves, our children, our children's children and their grandchildren. We should seize the moment to build on the success stories and lessons from the many countries and peoples who have been successful. We should also learn from the challenges and failures during the implementation of the MDGs in conceiving the goals, targets and indicators of the post-2015 development agenda. Tanzania stands ready to cooperate with the rest of the Members of the United Nations family in building consensus on the post-2015 development goals.

Allow me to conclude by appealing to everyone in this Hall to promise to work for a post-2015 development agenda that will make the world a better place for all of us to live in.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the United Republic of Tanzania for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

General debate

Address by Mr. Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of Canada.

Mr. Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Harper (Canada) (*spoke in French*): It is both an honour and a pleasure for me to once again address the Assembly.

(*spoke in English*)

For more than 70 years, Canada has supported the United Nations and its institutions in the pursuit of world peace. On many occasions Canadians have put their lives on the line to deter active conflict between peoples. It is a duty we accept and it is a record of which we are proud.

Today, there are many embattled parts of the world where the suffering of the local populations and the threats to global security deserve our urgent attention, and I could easily use my entire time here on any one of them. There are, however, other areas of service to humankind. It is to some of those that I wish to speak tonight, for there is more to peace than the absence of war. Where human misery abounds, where grinding poverty is the rule, where justice is systematically denied, there is no real peace — only the seeds of future conflict.

(*spoke in French*)

Of course, misery and injustice are not the only roots of war. We need only look at the world today to appreciate that.

(*spoke in English*)

Then we understand how the worst of human nature — perverse ideologies, religious extremism and the lust for power and plunder — can rob people in so many places of property, hope and life itself. That is why Canada has always been ready and willing to join with other civilized peoples and to challenge affronts to the international order, affronts to human dignity itself, such as those that are today present in Eastern Europe, particularly Ukraine, in the Middle East — Iraq, Syria and elsewhere — and of course many parts of Africa.

Canada's positions on those issues are well known, and we will continue to contribute to the extent to which we are able in assisting our friends and allies in the international community to deal with those grave challenges. But while those extreme situations are being confronted, other problems — pandemics, climate change and, of course, the problems of underdevelopment — remain.

(*spoke in French*)

And we feel strongly that no effort is ever in vain if it offers peoples an alternative to conflict and the possibility of a better life for them and their families.

(*spoke in English*)

Canadians therefore seek a world where freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law are respected. We hold those things to be intrinsically right and good. We also believe that they are the necessary foundation for a better world for more people and are necessary for prosperity. With prosperity comes hope, and with hope, the greater inclination of free peoples everywhere to find peaceful solutions to the things that divide them. Indeed, we believe that freedom, prosperity and peace form a virtuous circle.

For that reason, the growth of trade among nations and the delivery of effective development assistance to ordinary people — simple, practical aid — are the things that have become the signatures of our Government's outreach in the world. Trade means jobs, growth and opportunities. It has made great nations out of small ones. The story of my own country, Canada, is a case in point. Historically, trade has built our country, just as today it is reshaping our world. Trade means ordinary people can support their families and even dare to dream of something much more.

(*spoke in French*)

Our Government has worked hard to establish a vast network of modern trade agreements.

(*spoke in English*)

The trade agreements we have concluded tear down the barriers of tariff and excise and enlarge markets and opportunities for buyers and sellers alike. Canada has now established such links with countries that today possess more than a quarter of the world's people and nearly half the world's business. And our free-trade network will grow larger yet. It is not, by the way, an exclusive club for wealthy nations.

(*spoke in French*)

Canada has already liberalized its trade with countries better known for their determination to succeed than for the size of their economies, thereby opening the way for them to access Canadian and other markets. We have no reason to stop now. As indicated by my colleague from Senegal, President Macky Sall, "Aid is needed for development, but what is needed even more is investment". He is quite right.

(*spoke in English*)

Yet no matter how freely we trade, millions of people will need a helping hand for some time to come. Easily the most important example, and the one closest to my heart, is the worldwide struggle upon which so many of you have been engaged, in the maternal, newborn and child health initiative. Saving the lives of the world's most vulnerable mothers, infants and children must remain a top global priority. That is, the world must honour the commitments made in this very Hall to mothers and children in the year 2000. And there has been remarkable progress.

(*spoke in French*)

Thanks to inexpensive vaccines and the combined efforts of multiple partners, more children are being vaccinated today than ever before. And as the importance of nutrition becomes better understood, more and more children are surviving. Thanks to simple, low-cost, easily accessible techniques, literally millions of mothers and children who a mere 14 years ago might have died not only survive today, but thrive.

(*spoke in English*)

I think especially of the 2010 meeting of world leaders at Muskoka, which raised about $7.5 billion dollars, $2 billion of it from private donors. Based on that, the United Nations launched what the Secretary-General called the "Every woman, every child" initiative, with the goal of saving 16 million lives by 2016. An important aspect of that work has been monitoring both the receipt of monies pledged and how they are used. The assurance of full accountability has allowed recipients to plan with greater certainty and donors to give with confidence. With His Excellency President Kikwete of Tanzania, whom we have just heard, it was my honour to co-chair the World Health Organization's Information and Accountability Commission linked to that initiative.

On this, we have a clear vision, and that vision is achievable. We know how to help a great many of those vulnerable people. We have seen what can be done. We want simply to rally the passion and the will to make it happen. We are preventing deaths, and we can prevent more — deaths of thousands of children every day from easily preventable causes. We can stop the thousands of mothers dying in childbirth who would survive with relatively little intervention. We also know who we need to be working with — new partnerships that bring together Governments and agencies of the United Nations, including the World Health Organization, the World Food Programme and UNICEF, with the private sector, partnerships that are producing real results and taking us to new heights of excellence.

Here I am thinking of the Maternal, Newborn and Child Health Network in Canada, a group that represents a broad base of Canadian civil society and is a key implementing partner on the ground. As many representatives know, in May in Toronto, Canada hosted the world's leading actors on that subject. We heard the success stories — for example, the Micronutrient Initiative through which 180 million children received vitamin A, pills that cost pennies but drop child mortality by 25 per cent. We heard about the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization and how during the three-year period between 2010 and 2013, immunizations saved the lives of 2 million children.

We have partnerships to deliver better nutrition and partnerships to deliver better measurement, because vital statistics are critical. One cannot manage what one cannot measure. And in that mission, we measure progress in precious lives saved. So every child needs a birth certificate.

(*spoke in French*)

We also heard that in the world today is a greater obligation with regard to accountability, not only with regard to the vast sums of money pledged, but also the way in which that money is spent.

(*spoke in English*)

So our consensus was clear. We have seen success, and we have momentum. Saving the lives of children and mothers is a fight we can win. To get it done, two things are needed now: political focus and renewed financial commitment. I therefore urge the Assembly, in the strongest terms, to ensure that, maternal, newborn and child health remains a clear and top priority in the evolving post-2015 development agenda — and one of a limited number of priorities. That is the political focus we need. Then there is the financial commitment. I know we all have many competing priorities. But we have come so far that to stop now would be a tragedy.

I must say I was very encouraged this afternoon at the Secretary-General's "Every woman, every child" event, when President Kim of the World Bank and other leaders announced new financing for the Bank's Global Financing Facility for Every Woman Every Child. That Facility will help developing countries access the financing required to improve their health systems. I was pleased to announce that Canada would financially support the World Bank's Global Financing Facility for Every Woman Every Child.

(*spoke in French*)

We urge other countries to do likewise because to provide viable solutions to prevent the tragic death of women and children, we need to increase budget allocations on the part of both donors and the developing countries.

(*spoke in English*)

In closing, let me just say this. There are many individual countries and many specific causes that will rightly occupy our deliberations here this week. Let us also not forget to look beyond those crises at the long-term opportunities and efforts that can truly transform the world. We have it in our power to create a better kind of world for our children's children than the one we have today.

And we should, for it was never the intention of the founders of the United Nations — Canada being one of them — that ours would be a world where terrorists could get the resources necessary to sow death and destruction but where workers and families could not get jobs and opportunities, or where mothers and children could not obtain the necessities required to live and thrive.

The world that Canada strives for is the world that the founders of the United Nations wanted from the beginning, as boldly articulated in their Declaration of 1 January 1942 — a world where "life, liberty, independence and religious freedom" are defended, where "human rights and justice" are preserved, and where all join "in a common struggle against savage and brutal forces seeking to subjugate the world". In such a world, there can be prosperity for the impoverished, justice for the weak and, for the desperate, that most precious of all things, hope.

It is easy to look at the many problems of the world today and become despondent. Yet for all our failings, there has been, for most of humankind, tremendous progress in my lifetime. Therefore, I am enough of an optimist to think that because we can create a more prosperous, fairer and hopeful world, not only should we, but indeed, I believe we will find the will to do so.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of Canada for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Mark Rutte, Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Mr. Mark Rutte, Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Mark Rutte, Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Rutte (Netherlands): On 17 July, in a summer already marked by alarming reports from Syria, Iraq and Gaza, our country was confronted with a

stark international reality. The 298 passengers of Flight MH-17 would be alive today if not for the Crimea conflict and the destabilization of eastern Ukraine. Of those victims, 196 were Dutch nationals.

That tragedy has had an enormous impact on our country — so many innocent men, women and children, entire families ripped from neighbourhoods, empty desks in offices and schools, teammates gone forever. Everyone in the Netherlands knew someone in that plane, directly or indirectly, and we will feel the pain for years to come. Some of the victims still have not been identified, and that must be done as soon as possible. Nothing is more important to their loved ones, wherever in the world they may be.

This summer we were reminded again of how closely interwoven events at home and abroad can be and how important a stable world order is to our national interests. We saw again that when it comes to addressing the major problems facing the global community, there is simply no alternative to working together. That is the firm conviction of the Dutch Government.

We are grateful for the wide support for Security Council resolution 2166 (2014). All remains and personal belongings must be repatriated. The cause of the Flight MH-17 disaster must be brought to light, and those responsible must be brought to justice. Unhindered access to the crash site is therefore essential. The Dutch Government is fully committed to achieving those goals, working with all the countries and organizations involved.

The Constitution of the Netherlands contains a unique article that says, "The Government shall promote the development of the international legal order". That self-imposed responsibility comes from a long tradition of freedom, respect for the rule of law and our country's international orientation. In March, we put that principle into practice once again when we hosted the Nuclear Security Summit, a conference on an important topic that must remain high on the international agenda. The events of this summer have made us even more resolute about promoting the international legal order and about working to that end with everyone here in the General Assembly, in the knowledge that peace, justice and development are closely interconnected.

The year 2015 is an important one for the global development agenda. We will be reviewing the Millennium Development Goals and raising the bar once again. In July this year, the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals laid a solid foundation for the future that reflects the Netherlands' priorities. The most important goal is to eradicate extreme poverty within a generation in a way that does not harm economic growth, social equality or the environment. We must link short-term goals with long-term goals.

Despite the progress made, we know that fragile States, where the rule of law barely exists, had no chance of achieving the Millennium Development Goals. In 2013 there were more displaced people in conflict regions than ever before. For those reasons, the Netherlands applauds the Open Working Group's intention to include peace and the rule of law in the new framework.

We also welcome the Secretary-General's announced intention to establish the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response. The Netherlands will substantially increase its humanitarian aid. Part of that effort is a new contribution of €18 million to the fight against Ebola.

In the same vein, the Netherlands will continue to support and participate in United Nations peacekeeping missions. We currently have military personnel and relief workers serving in Mali, South Sudan and elsewhere. The upcoming review of peacekeeping missions is an opportunity to improve the instrument and make it more effective. The Netherlands believes that major progress can be made on that front by further integrating the three Ds: defence, development and diplomacy.

Our commitment to fulfilling Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) remains firm too, because women's leadership is essential to achieving peace and security. The important role that women play as change agents in politics, economic development and society cannot be emphasized enough.

As host country to many international legal institutions, including the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court, the Netherlands feels a special responsibility with respect to international law. When innocent people fall victim to impunity, human rights violations and the violence of war, the international community cannot and should not just stand by and just watch. Perpetrators must be brought to justice, however complex and time-consuming the process may be. We owe this not only to the passengers of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17, but also to the

victims of violence in Syria and in Iraq. The horrifying images of mass executions and beheadings in the region are burned into our memories. They impress upon us how important it is for the Security Council and international legal institutions to be able to act boldly and decisively.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands, a partner for peace, justice and development, is a candidate for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council in 2017 and 2018. We want to help modernize and strengthen that important United Nations body. Renewal is needed to ensure its effectiveness and legitimacy. The Security Council must be able to act in a crisis. When mass atrocities are being committed somewhere in the world, veto power should be exercised with greater restraint. We salute the French initiative in that regard. We also believe that the Security Council's authority and resolve would be enhanced if the United Nations Member States were more broadly represented. That is especially true of the African States which, in our opinion, are underrepresented.

In closing, Dag Hammarskjöld once said that

> "[t]he principles of the Charter are, by far, greater than the Organization in which they are embodied, and the aims which they are to safeguard are holier than the policies of any single nation or people" (*S/PV.751, para. 4*).

The Netherlands shares that conviction and remains steadfast in its commitment to promoting the international legal order, as our Constitution demands.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Mark Rutte, Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Qohir Rasulzoda, Prime Minister of the Republic of Tajikistan

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Tajikistan.

Mr. Qohir Rasulzoda, Prime Minister of the Republic of Tajikistan, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Qohir Rasulzoda, Prime Minister of the Republic of Tajikistan, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Rasulzoda (Tajikistan) (*spoke in Russian*): It is my great pleasure to endorse the warm congratulations extended to Mr. Sam Kutesa on his election to the responsible post of President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. I take this opportunity to express gratitude to Mr. John Ashe for his important contribution to the work of the General Assembly at its prior session.

My delegation shares the determination to eradicate hunger and poverty and to promote progress in elaborating the post-2015 development agenda. In our view, the post-2015 development agenda must be based on the foundation of the development goals formulated in the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) and envisage ways and means of responding to the challenges of a new generation.

The main goal of the post-2015 development agenda should be the eradication of poverty and inequality, as well as promoting sustainable development based on balanced consideration of social, economic and environmental factors. The sustainable development goals, based on the three pillars of sustainable development, the Rio de Janeiro principles and national specificities and priorities, should serve as the key components of the post-2015 development agenda. In that respect, we support the recommendations of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. Experience has shown that a goal can be achieved only if specific plans are complemented by the development of effective mechanisms for its review and implementation. Our hope is that this forum will become an important venue for ongoing dialogue and review of the implementation of the sustainable development goals.

Addressing issues concerning the financing of sustainable development efforts is equally important in achieving sustainable development. Global partnerships for development based on the Millennium Declaration have contributed to a certain extent towards the achievement of a number of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). However, gaps and flaws in global partnerships continue to cause additional difficulties on the path towards full and timely implementation of the MDGs.

We consider it necessary to strengthen and expand global partnerships in accordance with previous commitments. On that basis, new global partnerships should be established for the benefit of sustainable development, which will become the key element of the global system of promoting and advancing sustainable development. In that regard, we note the key importance of the recommendations of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing, the intergovernmental process tasked with discussing proposals to establish a United Nations mechanism to promote development and technology transfer.

Tajikistan has consistently strengthened its efforts to achieve the MDGs. Extra measures have been undertaken to create a favourable investment climate, including a balanced budget policy, diversifying the economy and increasing employment opportunities. The National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan up to 2015 is a road map for the Government to achieve sustainable economic growth, to provide the population with better access to basic social services and to reduce poverty.

As a result of such measures to ensure economic growth, in recent years we have managed to significantly reduce the level of poverty in the country. As a United Nations pilot country for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, we plan to carry out a comprehensive review of the implementation of those Goals in Tajikistan in 2015. The lessons learned from the implementation of the MDGs will be taken into account during the development of a new programme of sustainable development for the period up to 2030. We are willing to closely cooperate in a transparent way with United Nations agencies and programmes, partner countries and other relevant organizations.

As members may be aware, on 22 March 2005, in New York, we saw the launch of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life", 2005-2015, which promoted the coordinated implementation of the MDGs. The International Decade provided a strong impetus for various initiatives and efforts at different levels to promote access to safe drinking water and sanitation, to advance the integrated management of water resources, to strengthen and expand water cooperation and to raise awareness of water-related challenges.

At the same time, global climate change, increasing economic growth, higher population levels, the degradation of water sources and the deteriorating quality of water resources present the international community with additional extensive challenges. The reduction in water resources as a result of climate change may impede the achievement of sustainable development and aggravate the situation, in particular in arid and semi-arid regions, which continue to experience the greatest water shortages.

The International Year of Water Cooperation, which took place last year in the context of promoting the International Decade of Action, "Water for Life", 2005-2015, underscored the need for water resources management to be regulated on the basis of the principle of joint development, which provides for a broad framework for the harmonization of interests and the strengthening of mutual trust in addressing water issues. On the basis of the principle of joint development, water resources management could ensure the sustainable management of water resources, which is a key component of sustainable development. In that regard, we propose conducting a comprehensive review of the implementation of the International Decade of Action, "Water for Life", 2005-2015, and jointly developing specific recommendations to strengthen and revitalize the United Nations water agenda.

We believe access to modern and affordable energy services to be a key priority for achieving sustainable development. Tajikistan continues to consistently and comprehensively develop its energy potential, focusing on the integrated development of renewable sources. In addition to the construction of small- and medium-scale hydropower plants, larger regional projects are being developed. We are also exploring opportunities for the use of wind and solar energy. Through such projects, Tajikistan is significantly and specifically contributing to the reduction of harmful emissions and to the establishment of a solid foundation for sustainable development. I would like to take this opportunity to underscore that all those projects are being implemented in a transparent way, with due consideration for the social, economic and ecological aspects of the sustainable development of the country and the entire region.

Tajikistan supports the holding of the Ten-Year Review Conference on the Implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action on 3 to 5 November in Vienna. We believe that the new programme of action for the landlocked least developed countries will provide additional opportunities for the further

integration of such countries into the world economy. We should support and encourage as much as possible way the efforts of that group of countries to expand and to improve transport and energy infrastructure, the diversification of the economy and the streamlining of regional and interregional connectivity.

While the Organization's transformative agenda provides unique opportunities, unfortunately, it also tends to strengthen the interlinkage between today's threats and challenges. It is in the common interests of Member States to consistently implement the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and to effectively counter terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including the use of the Internet for the purpose of terror.

Illicit drug production and drug trafficking are also serious global issues. In recent decades, Tajikistan has gained extensive experience in combating drug trafficking. Under the country's President, the Drug Control Agency has been functioning successfully for 15 years. We have been actively strengthening counter-narcotics cooperation with neighbouring States, including within regional organizations. At the initiative of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon, Dushanbe will host a regional anti-narcotics conference in 2015, a year before the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem. The proposals of the conference participants will jointly help to develop a new international counter-narcotics policy. We look forward to the support of the United Nations, relevant States and international organizations for that conference.

In that regard, we attach great significance to coordinated and joint efforts with Afghanistan in combating drugs, as well as on other issues. The friendly Islamic State of Afghanistan is facing new challenges and expects the appropriate support from the international community. We are convinced that the fraternal Afghan people, with the support of the community of nations, will be able to successfully address the difficulties facing them. We believe that, in the current circumstances, the United Nations must take the lead in coordinating international efforts for the resolution of the question of Afghanistan.

Tajikistan believes that Afghanistan must be fully involved in the multifaceted regional cooperation process. It is critical to fully include Afghanistan in the multifaceted regional cooperation processes. The involvement of neighbouring countries in the development of Afghanistan, while taking into account the regional context in the post-conflict rehabilitation of the country, is key to the success of the ongoing efforts of the international community.

In our view, strengthening lasting peace and stability in conflict and post-conflict situations requires genuine assistance in addressing economic and social issues and support for efforts to restore effective Government institutions and a sustainable basis for long-term development. The regional multilateral structures must actively participate in strengthening security and stability, in implementing large-scale infrastructure projects and programmes and in expanding constructive and concrete cooperation and interaction.

In early September, Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan, hosted the fourteenth summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The heads of the SCO member States called for the strengthening of regional cooperation, joint development and mutual prosperity. They adopted measures on the liberalization of trade and investment and the improvement of transport and communications systems and on ensuring food and energy security. They also addressed other urgent regional issues of fundamental interest to our people.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that it is impossible to resolve the issues facing the General Assembly without strengthening, reforming, rationalizing and updating the entire United Nations system. Comprehensive reform of the United Nations should contribute to its strengthening and the enhancement of its capacity to respond to the latest developments in the world in a timely and adequate manner and to meet modern challenges and counteract modern threats. The current Assembly session provides a unique opportunity for the search of joint coordinated ways of addressing pressing issues, which we need take full advantage of.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Tajikistan for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Qohir Rasulzoda, Prime Minister of the Republic of Tajikistan, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste.

Mr. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Gusmão (Timor-Leste) (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): In September 2000, before becoming an independent country and while under the administration of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor, we came to the General Assembly as observers in order to familiarize ourselves with the grand designs for the new century, in the form of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Twelve years after Timor-Leste was admitted into this prestigious Organization, here we are again to take part in a review of what has been done and of what has not been done, looking at reasons and impacts.

Ultimately we want to revise the Assembly's manner of operation and redefine plans and strategies. However, other speeches made both here and at the Security Council open debate yesterday (S/PV.7272) show the other face — the more troubling one — of world problems, which is the general unquietness of spirit and the pressure to use force in order to punish. I therefore add my voice to all those who spoke before me in stating my deep concern about the particularly difficult time in which the community of nations is living. The United Nations has been the unassailable forum for approaching international issues and continues to be the hope of millions of people throughout the world.

In the year 2000, the challenges came from the condition of extreme poverty, educational deficits, enormous scarcity in terms of doctors and medication and lack of food production that affected the populations of many underdeveloped countries. Fourteen years later, little has been achieved despite the effort of the community of nations. Fragile or conflict-affected countries are the furthest from achieving the MDGs. Worse still, the challenges of the year 2000 have taken on a new path, with an increase in problems related to the rise of tensions and conflicts in many parts of the world.

The Organization's true greatness and its global leadership ability are measured in difficult times such as these, where the search for peaceful solutions through more intense dialogue may well determine the future of humankind. In order to respond to the challenges, we need an Organization that operates effectively. We need an Organization that is more active and less stereotyped — an Organization that strengthens cooperation with other organizations, particularly regional ones, and that acts with great respect for the sovereignty and the particularities of each State.

Every action carried out so far has just been a continuation of past measures that, in most cases, failed to achieve results that can be considered positive. We are witnessing an increasing loss of trust and we are faced with a crisis of values. More than trying to grasp the nature of the issues that are causing us to react, we must seek to understand the true causes of the problems. When faced with a threat that does not respect borders and that jeopardizes our commitment towards tolerance and peace, it is vital that we better understand the interconnectedness of problems, so as to locate the civility gap that prevents us from talking to each other and from finding consensus.

We have always advocated the view that the use of military force does not establish universal values or build democracies. Misguided approaches that fail to recognize the various and diverse elements of threats or, worse still, that are based on contradictions and conflicts of interest, only serve to fuel the fire of radicalism and extremist actions. Accordingly, we must reflect and think things over, because as they stand, we are merely sliding into the darkness of war, upholding the ancient principle of "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth".

That is why I reiterate to the General Assembly that our collective efforts to preserve world peace and security must reject ill-conceived plans that are only motivated by the strategic interests of the large Powers and their will to dominate. Instead, we need a plan that is more suited to the reality of each situation and that provides a true response to the main causes of the current crisis. This common agenda should not manipulate facts to produce collective reactions, but rather admit past mistakes related to the urge to impose

peace through war. Only by correcting our way of thinking and acting will we truly be giving peace a chance.

The responses to the crises faced by humankind should not be weakened by the desire to end war by waging war. Instead, they must be based on the desire to build a world of peace, supported by dialogue and by an effort — herculean, if need be — to respond to the root causes of problems that lead to terrorism, racism, extremism and intolerance. When dozens of millions of people throughout the world suffer the horrors of conflict and the countless abuses perpetrated in this century of globalization, the actions by the international community should give priority to the establishment of the best mechanisms for resolving the problems of exclusion, discrimination and marginalization of groups, sects and ethnicities.

We must also ensure, from the very start, that the societies emerging from the ashes of those conflicts and committed to leaving the memories of the past behind are entitled to a vital transitional period with respect to their behaviours, their ways of thinking and acting, and their own internal rules and commitments. Otherwise, we will just be sowing the seeds for new conflicts that we may end up reaping later on. The war in Iraq, which has destroyed the legacy of a centuries-old civilization, and the bloody conflicts in Afghanistan, Libya, Syria and Ukraine, should make the international community draw its conclusions about the international standards applied in those contexts. The uncertainty and the bloody anguish that surround Israel and Palestine, with those two peoples destined to live side by side, should alert us once and for all to the fact that fear and insecurity for the future lead to hate, which is the root of all evils.

Timor-Leste knows only too well the consequences and the scars of war. In addition to the hundreds of thousands of Timorese killed, we also witnessed the near-complete destruction of our country. A State born without the ability to ensure and promote the fundamental rights and liberties of its citizens is a fragile State that is unable to carry out its main mission.

Immediately after the war, we started to reconcile Timorese society. We wanted to achieve peace, since without peace we could not feel free. We have also embraced Indonesia in order to achieve true and genuine reconciliation. Instead of feeding hatred and vengeance, we nurtured solidarity and tolerance between our communities. In that manner, we cultivated a sound relationship of cooperation between our States and our peoples.

Western democracies are prone to paying for costly international tribunals for judging genocides. They also tend to feel shocked by the human rights violations that occur in developing countries. The issue with Indonesia cannot be seen only in terms of the actions by its military and its generals. Instead, it must be seen within a broader perspective, in which the Governments of the Western Powers sold sophisticated weapons like rifles, warships, fighters, ammunition, tanks and cannons to the Indonesian military, in addition to providing it with training, so that it could decimate the Timorese. That is why we Timorese and Indonesians preferred instead to record the truth of the facts, to close this painful chapter in our past and to look to the future, which required and continues to require much effort to develop both nations and improve the living conditions of both peoples.

With its pluralistic and tolerant society, Indonesia is more than a close neighbour. Indeed, it is an inspiration for Timor-Leste. Under the wise leadership of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, we have witnessed the establishment of a modern democracy that harmonizes progress with the promotion of national, regional and international peace. We sincerely hope that the peaceful transition to President Joko Widodo will bring more success to that great nation. And I say this in a year when Timor-Leste is celebrating the twelfth anniversary of its independence.

Mr. Mnisi (Swaziland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We have learned from our weaknesses and today we are living in an atmosphere of social and political peace. We are very familiar with the challenges that are inherent in the efforts of developing a nation and of building peace and security. We are very thankful for the support that the United Nations and all donor countries have provided to Timor-Leste. Nevertheless, the years of partnership have also taught us important lessons, which we have been sharing with the world, particularly the fragile States. We are encouraging them to take ownership of their processes and be committed to the future of their citizens.

We have also started to be more internationally active. We have been working hard within the scope of the Group of Seven Plus, a group that brings together 20 fragile and conflict-affected countries. In addition to sharing experiences and knowledge and seeking to put

the needs of those countries on the global development agenda, we continue repeating, as many leaders have been doing since yesterday, that without peace there can be no development. In turn, without development there can be no room for democratic transition, since democracy is a dynamic process of assimilating principles and values, rather than a process to be measured by elections alone.

And that brings us to the subject of the general debate at this sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly — the post-2015 development agenda. Inequality is increasing dangerously throughout the world, with wealth being concentrated in the hands of a few to the detriment of us all. Even after the world learned of the greed and the corruption of the international financial system that led to the global financial crisis, we are now seeing how the faltering economic recovery is benefiting only those who were responsible for the financial meltdown in the first place. Despite the best efforts of the Secretary-General and his team at the United Nations, we are almost in 2015 and know that 2.2 billion people throughout the world are already in or are entering the ranks of the extreme poor, without even knowing what the Millennium Development Goals are.

In that regard, I must draw attention to the incorrect practice on the part of international organizations to view each of the 193 States Members of the United Nations in the same manner, regardless of whether they are large or small, rich or poor, young or in a transitional period or centuries-old, developed, with emerging economies, or underdeveloped. And these development indices create scales of values that are both unfair and demotivating to the majority of the least developed countries. Accordingly, all of us in attendance here today have a historic opportunity to share our thoughts on the enormous challenges ahead of us, so as to outline a truly transformative agenda in which no country is left behind.

However, the issue that deserves our collective attention and requires urgent measures is the mitigation of the environmental threats that continue to increase and are hindering the legitimate perspectives of emerging and developing countries. Fortunately, yesterday's summit on climate change raised expectations in relation to actual action plans being implemented in some countries. The plans will be expanded to the global level next year in Paris. Some developed countries have also committed to providing capital to the Adaptation Fund, which is vitally important to developing countries. Ms. Emilia Pires, the Minister of Finance of Timor-Leste, was a member of the high-level panel that advised the Secretary-General on that agenda.

In 2013 and until August, Timor-Leste had the honour of assuming the presidency of the sixty-ninth session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). As such, we had the privilege of presiding over the session for one year and working with ESCAP and the nations of the Asia-Pacific region in order to achieve progress and improve human development. Timor-Leste is committed to that noble ideal and to that deserving mission of helping to nurture a culture of peace in our region through the gradual and persistent reduction of social inequalities within each country and among countries.

However, in our region, including within the scope of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, countries are cooperating and promoting peace, which has enabled the rise of the Asian region, led by China, and lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty. However, we cannot but be concerned by the developments in the East and South China Sea.

That brings us to a key issue that is of vital importance to Timor-Leste. I am speaking of the need to set maritime borders between countries in a clear and serious manner, in line with international law. Back in 2002, when we began to walk our own path in freedom, we saw a globalized world in which the arrogance of the powerful and the ambition of the rich, who prey upon the inexperience and ignorance of the poor and the weak to act dishonestly and in bad faith, prevailed, as a serious insult to universal values. And I must affirm that big multinationals have always played an improper and disloyal role, acting dishonestly and in bad faith when dealing with poor countries.

Timor-Leste, a young, small and poor country, was caught off guard in that sophisticated culture of manipulation and deceit. Nevertheless, we want to continue believing that international mechanisms, such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, contribute to justice between nations and understanding between peoples, so as to defend sovereign rights and the truth.

Today, those commitments are vital in order to start rebuilding trust in the world system and to prevent tensions from increasing. The strengthening of dialogue and tolerance and the promotion of a new diplomacy

must be translated from a set of good intentions into actual deeds in the international arena. But what is truly intriguing is the fact that no decent country has yet advocated the need to carry out inquiries to determine the origin of the weapons used to massacre civilians, particularly those used to kill women and children, so as to identify the true beneficiaries of the world crisis — those who are selling weapons to uncontrolled gangs throughout the world.

Before I conclude, I would like to inform the Assembly that this year, Timor-Leste has assumed the rotating presidency of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP). In that forum, we want to use diplomacy and cooperation to nurture our joint economic potential by making use of our regional ties. We also want to spread a message of peace, human rights and social justice throughout all the forums in which we are represented.

Guinea-Bissau is a member of that community and a country with which Timor-Leste has been closely involved, including within the scope of the Group of Seven Plus, particularly once Timor-Leste realized that Guinea-Bissau had been left to its fate at the mercy of international sanctions. After a devastating cycle of coups, we felt that the people of Guinea-Bissau needed peace and stability, and we saw how their leaders were striving to achieve a collective commitment that would benefit the people and the country.

Timor-Leste had the honour of providing financial support and of sending a technical team to provide assistance throughout the entire electoral process in Guinea-Bissau. That process, which involved massive democratic participation, was a success and restored constitutional order in the country. Still, as we all know, elections are but a starting point, and a State without the means to ensure the basic needs of its people faces countless challenges that can jeopardize the promise of peace and national cohesion.

In line with the subject of the debate in the General Assembly, I must say that it is now urgent to create the conditions to enable Guinea-Bissau to move from fragility to resilience by supporting its State agencies. Guinea-Bissau needs to restore its public administration and its State agencies, as well as to reform its defence and security sector by modernizing its forces. Furthermore, Guinea-Bissau requires a financial boost in order to jump-start its economy.

Within the scope of the CPLP, we want to have active collaboration with the authorities of Guinea-Bissau and with its international partners, namely the Economic Community of West African States, so as to hold an international conference on aid to Guinea-Bissau as soon as possible. The conference should start by focusing on matters of extreme urgency, such as salaries, food, security, fuel and health. Timor-Leste has already contributed $6 million, which corresponds to one month of public-sector salaries in the country. I also urge every country in attendance to join Timor-Leste and the CPLP countries, in keeping with the highest values of international solidarity, in supporting the consolidation of the achievements made so far by the people of Guinea-Bissau. Indeed, that is something that will also convey a promise of peace to the entire African continent.

And I cannot talk about Africa — a continent that is already wounded on the inside and ravaged by hunger and poverty — without mentioning the scourge of the Ebola virus, which is presently challenging the international health system itself. That epidemic, which is unprecedented in our time, requires a vital and urgent commitment by the international community. This morning in the Ebola campaign I found out that Timor-Leste will provide $1 million as immediate support within the spirit of solidarity that guides the Group of Seven Plus, which includes Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea-Conakry. Next year we will also be allocating an equal amount to help fight the epidemic.

The great challenge in today's world is liberating people from fear. I am talking about the fear of difference, insecurity, hunger, poverty and disease, the fear of losing power or the fear of becoming a slave to power. In today's unbalanced and unequal world, we need to have the courage to speak a language of trust and tranquillity. We need to pacify minds, encourage dialogue and free people from doubt and feelings of injustice so that they acquire greater tolerance and greater respect for differences and diversity. We need to free people from the yoke of poverty and from the deplorable conditions in which they are living so as to ensure their right to development. We still have time to write a different and more humane tale for today's generation and future generations.

Timor-Leste wants to make an active contribution to a better world, where each country may live in tolerance, harmony and tranquillity within a true atmosphere of friendship and solidarity that promotes

peace. Such peace must start in the minds and behaviours of the people at every level of society, so that they can have a positive influence on the policies of the global centres of decision-making. That is the only way for us to believe that the baby from the Marshall Islands who touched all our hearts two days ago may be certain that her future is guaranteed and that she will be able to live in those small islands that make up her country.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Ms. Erna Solberg, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway.

Ms. Erna Solberg, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming Her Excellency Ms. Erna Solberg, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway, and inviting her to address the General Assembly.

Ms. Solberg (Norway): The leaders who gathered at the United Nations Climate Summit have taken important steps to mobilize action and ambition on climate change. Now we need to make sure that the positive results are followed through and expanded as we prepare for an agreement in Paris next year.

When we meet at the General Assembly next year, we will adopt the new set of global goals for our common future — the sustainable development goals (SDGs). They must build on the success of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). They must be realistic and ambitious. Like the MDGs, the SDGs should be few in number, concrete and measurable. Meanwhile, achieving the eight Millennium Development Goals will create a solid foundation for sustainable development. As co-chair of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's MDG Advocacy Group, I will use every opportunity to help build that foundation over the remaining 462 days until the deadline.

We must accelerate our efforts, and to do so we need to enter into broad partnerships that include the private sector, civil society and Governments. We need to make use of the best possible innovative solutions and technologies. Governments and national political leaders must take the lead and ensure local ownership. At the same time, we must support the remarkable work that many people are doing to implement the MDGs in practice.

The frightening Ebola epidemic in West Africa reminds us of the fragility of our progress and development. We must build health-care systems that can support courageous and determined individuals like Josephine Finda Sellu. Ms. Sellu, the deputy nurse matron at a Government hospital in Sierra Leone, lost 15 of her nurses to Ebola. Nevertheless, she never stopped working in that death trap. She is a true fighter for the MDGs.

Education, particularly for girls, is the superhighway to ending poverty. Poverty, discrimination and the use of force often prevent girls from getting the education they are entitled to. Sexual violence, abductions and deadly attacks are the most despicable ways in which girls' right to education is being violated. I condemn the abductions of schoolgirls by Boko Haram in the strongest possible terms. In the face of terrorists threatening to deprive children of their right to education, we should be inspired by Malala Yousafzai. Malala brought to light the plight of the millions of children around the world who are denied an education. If one schoolgirl can take on the Taliban, then surely the world community can defeat extremism and terrorism.

Terrorists and extremists are trying to stop us from educating children. Peace is vital for achieving universal primary education. The same can be said for the other MDGs, not least the goal on reducing poverty. That is why we must focus on conflict-affected countries. A girl growing up in Syria today cannot look forward to going to school, because there is no school to go to. A pregnant teenage girl in South Sudan will not get the maternal health services she needs because it is too risky for health workers to travel. From the Security Council Chamber to the modest homes in the Swat Valley in Pakistan, we can all help to end poverty by promoting peace, but all those different efforts at the global, regional, national and local levels must work in concert.

It has been 70 years since a group of leaders met in Washington, D. C., to discuss the creation of the United Nations. One of the most fundamental tenets of the new world order created in 1945 was respect for internationally recognized borders. Norway condemns Russia's violations of international law and its continuing destabilization of eastern Ukraine. Any settlement of the conflict must uphold international law and respect the territorial integrity of Ukraine. The ceasefire agreed on 5 September must be respected and the provisions of the agreement implemented on the ground. Russia bears a particular responsibility in that regard.

The Security Council is mandated to maintain peace and security, but has failed to address the situation in Syria and Ukraine effectively. We know why. Some of the big Powers still believe in outdated ideas of zero-sum games and spheres of influence. We are hopeful that the Council will continue to stand united against the threat of the terrorist group known as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). We support the United States initiative and sponsored Security Council resolution 2178 (2014) on foreign terrorist fighters. We encourage the countries of the region to take a leading role in fighting ISIL.

Armed conflict and civil war have created man-made humanitarian disasters in Syria, Iraq, South Sudan, the Central African Republic and Somalia. Earlier this year, Norway hosted a humanitarian donor conference for South Sudan, and we will shortly co-host a donor conference to address the aftermath of the conflict in Gaza. Donor conferences are important, but we need to look beyond the emergencies. We need to build on and improve the current system, when we meet for the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016. We must make sure that humanitarian aid supports not only short-term recovery, but also long-term development. Besides, long-term development cooperation should help countries prevent, prepare for, withstand and recover from humanitarian crises in the future.

International peace, national security, social development and individual prosperity can best be fostered under a system of good democratic governance and human rights. Efforts to promote respect for human rights can help prevent armed conflict and mass atrocities. Nobel Peace Prize laureate Shirin Ebadi, herself a leading human rights defender, stated in her Nobel lecture that:

> "[i]f the twenty-first century wishes to free itself from the cycle of violence, acts of terror and war, there is no other way except by understanding and putting into practice every human right for all mankind, irrespective of race, gender, faith, nationality or social status."

I agree with that.

Human rights is one of the three pillars of the United Nations, based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the Assembly on 10 December 1948. Norway endorses the Secretary-General's "Human Rights Up Front" initiative, which places the protection of human rights at the heart of United Nations strategies and operational activities. The United Nations needs a strong and assertive human rights pillar. Only if we fund the human rights pillar properly can we achieve the results that we need and want from our world Organization.

The promotion and protection of human rights is first and foremost the responsibility of States. We are, however, facing large implementation gaps. Attacks, threats, intimidation and reprisals against human rights defenders are increasingly being reported. New laws restricting freedom of expression and the work of civil society are being adopted. Discrimination is widespread, particularly against minorities, such as indigenous people and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons.

The rule of law and civil liberties are also fundamental to the development of the private sector and attracting investment. Moreover, we know that enabling women to fully enjoy their social and economic rights unleashes tremendous economic growth.

We must stay focused on accelerating progress towards the MDGs during the remaining 462 days. We must let ourselves be inspired by those who serve at the front line of those efforts, like Ms. Sellu and other doctors and nurses who are risking their lives to treat patients with Ebola.

As we set our future development agenda beyond 2015, we must also make some adjustments. Peace and stability must be included. Climate issues must be addressed. Good, democratic governance, with respect for the rule of law and human rights, will be crucial for achieving sustainable development for us all. And all that means, quite simply, is to be doing the right things right.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway for the statement she has just made.

Ms. Erna Solberg, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Abdelilah Benkirane, Head of Government of the Kingdom of Morocco

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Head of Government of the Kingdom of Morocco.

Mr. Abdelilah Benkirane, Head of Government of the Kingdom of Morocco, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Abdelilah Benkirane, Head of Government of the Kingdom of Morocco, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Benkirane (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Sovereign of the Kingdom of Morocco, asked me to convey to the Assembly his greetings. He also asked me to deliver the following statement, prepared for the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly:

"It gives me great pleasure to take part in the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, for which President Kutesa has suggested 'Delivering on and implementing a transformative post-2015 development agenda' as the central theme. That is a very relevant choice, which is fully in line with our Organization's priorities, especially as it encompasses economic, social, environmental, security and political considerations. I have therefore decided to devote my address to that important topic, knowing that the Kingdom of Morocco's standpoint regarding other items on the session's agenda will be presented during the General Assembly committee meetings or at the ministerial meetings, which will be held on the sidelines of the General Assembly.

"Achieving sustainable development is one of the pressing challenges facing humankind. It is particularly important, in that respect, to strike a balance between the requirements for economic and social progress and the protection of the environment, on the one hand, and the safeguard of the rights of future generations, on the other. Aware of those critical challenges, we have sought to set up a distinctive development model rooted in the culture and in the specific national values of the Moroccan people — a model which also takes into account the need for positive interaction with international principles and objectives in that area.

"Morocco has therefore managed to develop a pioneering national initiative for human development, together with ambitious programmes in the field of renewable energy — especially solar and wind power generation — which are a key component of sustainable development. However, I am not here today to discuss my country's experience or our achievements. I am here to make an appeal for developing countries to be treated fairly, especially in Africa, and for the development issue to be addressed objectively.

"As the Assembly knows, sustainable development is not something that can be achieved through decisions and ready-made prescriptions, nor is there a single model in that area. Indeed, every country follows a path of its own, taking into consideration its historical development, cultural heritage, human and natural resources, specific political circumstances, as well as its economic choices and the obstacles and challenges facing it. What applies to the West should not be used as the sole criterion for determining the efficiency of other development models; nor should one make comparisons between countries, however similar their circumstances may be, even when those countries belong to the same geographical area.

"As a result, the first call I should like to make from the rostrum regards the need to respect the characteristic values and principles of every country as it builds its own development model. That is particularly true for the developing countries that are still suffering from the consequences of colonialism. Colonialism caused severe damage to colonized countries. For many years, it hindered their development process, exploited their resources, as well as the energies of their sons and daughters, brought about profound change in the customs and cultures of the peoples concerned and sowed the seeds not only of division between members of the same community, but also of conflict and discord between neighbouring countries. Although many years have passed, the colonizers bear a

historical responsibility for the tough — and at times tragic — circumstances experienced by some countries of the South, particularly in Africa. Today, given the adverse consequences suffered, former colonial Powers have no right to ask the countries of the South to introduce radical change rapidly, on the basis of a frame of reference with which they are unfamiliar, be it in terms of their cultures, their principles or their values. It is as if no development were possible other than through a single model: that of the West.

"I now turn to the second appeal I would like to make to the international community. We need more realism and wisdom when dealing with those countries. There should also be greater consideration for their circumstances and the paths they choose to achieve democracy and development. Some Western countries — which asked for no one's authorization to colonize countries of the South — instead of currently providing the necessary assistance to the people of those countries, continue to impose on them harsh conditions, thereby hampering their ability to make progress. Furthermore, all Western countries and their affiliated institutions do is give lessons, and, at best, a few pieces of advice. As for support, it is very limited and is always conditional. What is more, they ask the countries of the South to achieve stability and development within a very short time frame and according to imposed conditions, without taking into account those countries' development processes or their specific national circumstances.

"There can be no stability without development. By the same token, development cannot be achieved without stability. Both hinge on respect for the sovereignty of States, their territorial integrity, culture and customs, as well as on a dignified life for all their citizens. Moreover, the rating and classification of those countries, according to current standards, raises a number of questions. The rating process has not only shown its limitations, but also how far removed it is from the reality of the countries of the South and how incapable it is of giving an objective account of the level of human development achieved by those countries. As inadequate as it unfortunately is, the aid granted is often based on those ratings and their quasi-impossible conditions. We therefore appeal for intangible capital to be one of the primary criteria for measuring wealth and rating nations. As clearly shown by World Bank studies, intangible capital takes into consideration a series of factors related to the living conditions of the population, such as security, stability, human resources, institutional development and the quality of life and of the environment, all of which are elements that have a major impact on crafting public policies. The evolution of those countries should not be governed by any rating or classification; instead, it should be viewed as a historical process based on the positive experiences of each country. Similarly, every country's characteristics should be respected.

"The reference to the negative impact of colonialism does not mean we wish to put any party in the dock of a law court. It is simply an earnest appeal for justice for the countries of the South and a reconsideration of the way they are dealt with and supported in their gradual march towards progress. In my address in Abidjan, in February, I insisted on the fact that Africa did not need humanitarian aid as much as it needed mutually beneficial partnerships. I also stressed that Africa needed to turn the page on its past and overcome its political, economic and social problems — that it needed to rely on its own resources to achieve its development. That is exactly what Morocco has sought to accomplish through a series of important agreements signed with a number of African sister nations. In that respect, I wish to mention in particular the strategic agreement signed with Gabon for the production of fertilizers for African markets in order to contribute to development and food security on the African continent, which is home to a staggering 60 per cent of the world's unexploited land. That is an outstanding model of South-South cooperation that reflects our capacity as African countries to develop the continent by relying on ourselves and investing in the natural resources of our countries.

"As the Assembly knows, achieving development does not hinge merely on a set of projects and on funding; nor is underdevelopment synonymous with the countries of the South. Indeed, the problem has nothing to do with Africans' attributes and skills. Africans have proved their ability to produce and create whenever the right conditions are met, and whenever they are able to rid themselves of the oppressive legacy of colonialism. Similarly, development in Africa has little to do with the nature of the land or the weather, as harsh as they may be in some parts of the continent. It

is more closely related to a deep-rooted economic dependence, a lack of support and funding and the absence of a sustainable development model. As a result, providing aid to those countries is not an option or an act of generosity so much as it is a necessity and a duty. What States really need, though, is fruitful cooperation, grounded in mutual respect, so that they can create the right conditions, in theory and in practice, to move on to the next stage of the process of promoting both democracy and development, without any interference by others in their internal affairs. In return, they must commit to good governance.

"The world stands at a crossroads today. Either the international community supports developing countries in their quest to achieve progress and ensure security and stability, or we shall all face the consequences of more conflicts and greater fanaticism, violence and terrorism — all of which feed on feelings of injustice and exclusion — and no part of the world will be safe. As people grow more acutely aware of the cross-border threats posed by the lack of sustainable and human development, and as we realize that ours is ultimately a common destiny, I am sure that eventually there will be a global awakening regarding the need to work for a more secure, equitable and humane world."

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Head of Government of the Kingdom of Morocco for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Abdelilah Benkirane, Head of Government of the Kingdom of Morocco, was escorted from the rostrum.

The Acting President: I now call on Her Excellency Ms. Natalia Gherman, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova.

Ms. Gherman (Republic of Moldova): It is with great honour and a special sense of responsibility that I address the General Assembly today. My country has chosen a European future, and that will make Moldova stronger and more prosperous. This year we have signed, ratified and are already provisionally applying the new Association Agreement with the European Union (EU). The Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, an integral part of the Agreement, opens new perspectives for Moldova's access to European and world markets. That will make our economy more competitive, stimulate economic growth and integrate Moldova into the mainstream of global trade, with all its benefits. The implementation of the Agreement is our short-term priority. Our next goal is to apply for full-fledged European Union membership.

Now that we have defined our path and established the framework for our further development, we must focus on systemic improvements. Strengthening democracy and the rule of law, improving our investment climate, developing rural areas and enhancing our energy security — those are the objectives to be accomplished in the near term.

We are grateful to all our development partners for supporting Moldova's modernization agenda. They have helped us to strengthen good governance, promote justice and domestic reforms, support the modernization of the agricultural sector and implement energy interconnection projects. Just recently, a new pipeline was completed that connects Moldova via Romania to the European Union's gas network. That and other strategic projects connecting Moldova to Europe, including power grids, roads and bridges, will be implemented in coming years.

Our ambitions, however, will not be fulfilled if the benefits of closer association with Europe are not fully shared by our citizens living in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova. Just like the rest of Moldova, people and businesses in that region want the development opportunities that association with the European Union clearly brings. The Free Trade Area with the European Union will increase production and exports. Jobs, salaries, pensions and benefits will therefore rise significantly.

Visa-free travel by all Moldovan citizens to the European Union as of April this year, along with new trade and investment opportunities, are just a few real examples that demonstrate that Moldova is on the right track. However, alongside the conflict-settlement process, we will continue focusing on building confidence among citizens, the private sector and all other stakeholders of the entire country.

Against that background, the resolution of the Transnistrian conflict and the reintegration of Moldova is another top priority for my Government. In our effort to resolve the conflict, our goal remains the same: to achieve a political settlement based on respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic

of Moldova, with a special political status for its Transnistrian region. All of our international partners involved in the settlement process agree on those basic principles. And today more than ever before, we need their united and proactive support to help solve that protracted conflict.

Discussions on the political and security aspects of the conflict should be resumed without delay within the 5+2 format for negotiations. There are other outstanding issues that create additional obstacles to the settlement process. The continuing presence of Russia's military forces and ammunition in the Transnistrian region, contrary to international commitments and the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, is one of those issues. We expect the Russian Federation to finalize the withdrawal process without any further delay. We also believe that bringing the peacekeeping arrangement in line with international standards by transforming the current operation into a civilian multinational mission would provide a positive impulse to the settlement process.

Moldova seeks to develop fruitful relations with all its partners in the East and West. In the past five years, my Government has promoted a coherent and predictable foreign-policy agenda, which is based on our European integration choice. Regrettably, Moldova currently faces unjustified trade restrictions on the export of its agricultural products to the Russian Federation. Trade relations in the whole Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region have been affected, but we nevertheless hope that a continuing dialogue with our Russian partners, based on the World Trade Organization and CIS rules, will contribute to the resumption of normal trade relations with Russia. We are grateful for the assistance of our trading partners, particularly the European Union, for supporting the Government in its efforts to lessen the immediate impact of the restrictions on Moldovan farmers and producers. Full liberalization of the European Union market for Moldovan wines and agriculture products, as well as a new free-trade-area agreement with Turkey, will contribute to market diversification in the future. We will continue to explore new trade partnerships in the world.

We have followed with great concern the developments in Ukraine. A year ago, no one could have imagined that Ukraine would be plunged into such a painful and profound crisis. At the very same time, Ukraine, like Moldova, has also established a path for European integration, and that offers a real chance for improving people's well-being while facilitating reconciliation, reconstruction and security. We believe that the sovereign choices of all members of the international community should be respected.

We recall the need for all members of the international community to respect the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Like many other countries, we will never recognize the annexation of Crimea. We also encourage any involvement by the international community, in particular by the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, in actions to stabilize the situation on the ground. The sovereignty and territorial integrity of our neighbour Ukraine must be respected.

Today we face new and increasingly complex security challenges. Moldova is doing its part to address those challenges by making its own contribution to the promotion of peace, security and stability in Europe and in the international arena. We have taken concrete measures to support United Nations, EU and NATO efforts in that regard. This year, Moldova deployed 41 soldiers to the NATO-led International Security Force in Kosovo operation, under the authority of the Security Council, and contributed to the EU Training Mission in Mali. That represents a new level of commitment by Moldova to promoting international peace, security and stability.

Moldova is committed to protecting human rights at the national and international levels. We have made steady progress in the implementation of the relevant United Nations special procedures and recommendations. Moldova has volunteered to present a mid-term evaluation report on the Universal Periodic Review recommendations in the area of human rights by October.

At the same time, a national strategic programme for demographic security until 2025 is currently being implemented in the Republic of Moldova. We want to become a regional centre of excellence for the best policies in reproductive health and to contribute to the objectives of the United Nations Population Fund.

Moldova also shares its best practices on migration and development with other countries in the eastern and southern neighbourhoods of the European Union. We are actively engaged in the work of the Global Forum on Migration and Development.

Moldova also supports the advancement of a free and independent society, including freedom of expression on the Internet and in other media. For the past three years, my country has had one of the best and most affordable Internet connections in the world. More than 65 per cent of Moldovans access the Internet at least once a day. That is why I am proud that Moldova was accepted this year as a member of the Freedom Online Coalition. Moldova's membership of the Open Government Partnership is another important contribution to the commitments made with regard to the Millennium Development Goals. We are currently implementing a comprehensive e-governance agenda. Today, Moldova is one of the first countries of the region, and among the first 16 countries in the world, to have an open data portal. Just recently, in August, the Government of Moldova approved the new Open Data Policy in line with the Open Data Charter of the Group of Eight.

We have taken one step forward in agreeing on a new post-2015 development agenda and a new set of sustainable development goals. My country will continue to contribute to that effort by hosting, in February 2015, an event at which we will consolidate and endorse the conclusions of the high-level dialogue on capacity-building and sustainable development.

Let me reiterate Moldova's commitment to promoting the core principles of the Organization and to assisting the international community in delivering on the greatest promise of the United Nations — peace, justice, security and development for the people of the world.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Pierre Moukoko Mbonjo, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cameroon.

Mr. Moukoko Mbonjo (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): The President of the Republic of Cameroon, His Excellency Mr. Paul Biya, has requested me to convey to members, the Secretary-General and his fellow staff his warm greetings and to deliver his statement before the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session.

> "Next year, we should adopt the post-2015 development agenda in follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Throughout the sixty-eighth session, our representatives actively worked to develop new goals to pick up the MDG torch. That important task, since it concerns the raison d'être of the Organization, is not finished. It will be incumbent upon the President to see it through. I am sure that he will succeed. Rest assured of the full and wholehearted cooperation of my country in that regard.
>
> "For the post-2015 period, the United Nations seeks a transformative agenda that gives priority to the eradication of poverty and hunger, as well as to sustained and inclusive economic growth. Cameroon fully shares that vision.
>
> "In Cameroon, since 2010, we have implemented a strategy for growth and employment whose primary purpose is indeed the reduction of poverty. The measures taken in that regard aim in particular at creating jobs and improving the living conditions of the population. The recovery of our economy and our public finances, which has fostered the return of growth, bodes well for the success of our efforts. However, such progress, substantial and significant as it is, has not yet enabled us to eradicate poverty. In the areas of education, health care, access to water and electricity, roads, et cetera, there is still a long way to go in order to meet the needs of our people.
>
> "Most of the countries targeted by the MDGs — the developing countries — face similar situations. That is why, like the President, we support a transformative post-2015 agenda. That will clearly require some changes to our approach to development. It should no longer be seen as an external process but, rather, as an expression of the wishes and needs of the target populations. Moreover, that is the common position of the African countries.
>
> "Following a review of the MDGs, it will also be necessary to establish a follow-up mechanism for the goals of the new system. Finally, we will inevitably have to change the way in which development aid is financed in order to improve its effectiveness.
>
> "Once those conditions are met, we should work on the most important matter of all, namely, ensuring security. For it goes without saying that without security there can be no development. Take the example of my country, which is proud of having been a haven of peace and stability for decades. To the east, since March 2013, the Central African Republic has seen its security situation severely deteriorate: massacres and population

displacements have jeopardized any hope of development, not to mention the flux of tens of thousands of refugees towards Cameroon. In the far north, attacks by the Boko Haram group, which is more concerned about imposing shariah law than improving the living conditions of populations, threaten the integrity of our territory. There, too, the lack of security has caused thousands of displaced persons to flee to my country. It is estimated that in recent months Cameroon has hosted more than 200,000 refugees from all kinds of origins. It goes without saying that my country will continue to honour its tradition of hospitality. However, if that situation should continue, there is no guarantee that we will have the resources to deal with it.

"The time allocated to me does not allow me to mention the other areas of tension and conflict, whether in Africa, the Middle East or Eastern Europe. The causes and issues are varied. I will therefore limit myself to urging the parties concerned to negotiate and to seek peaceful solutions.

"That is the path that Nigeria and Cameroon chose to settle the dispute between them, some years ago, over the Bakassi peninsula. It enabled us to find a solution conforming with international law and, above all, to seal an unfailing friendship between our two countries. Moreover it was, I should stress, in harmony with the ideals of the Charter of our Organization."

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Mankeur Ndiaye, Minister for Foreign Affairs and for Senegalese Living Abroad of the Republic of Senegal.

Mr. Ndiaye (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): I particularly welcome the opportunity today to represent His Excellency Mr. Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal, before the General Assembly and to deliver this intervention on his behalf.

In line with my predecessors, I would like to extend a warm welcome to Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa and express my delegation's particular pleasure in seeing him assume the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. In reiterating our warm wishes for success in fulfilling his important duty, I assure him of the unwavering support of my delegation, which, as always, will contribute in a constructive manner to the full realization of the goals of the United Nations. I also pay warm tribute to his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. John William Ashe, whose dynamism and open mind greatly contributed to the success of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly. I also want to express, on behalf of the President of Senegal, our full gratitude to Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon for his tireless efforts in promoting peace, security, development and human rights.

I am therefore particularly pleased by the opportunity to represent President Macky Sall and to take the opportunity offered to my delegation to welcome the conclusions of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals and those on the financing of sustainable development for the purpose of defining the main pillars of the post-2015 development agenda. The scope of those challenges, linked to this important moment for humankind, requires that our States adopt appropriate strategies and measures with a view to assuring a good transition and calmly facing the expected global transformation.

The theme of this session — "Delivering on and implementing a transformative post-2015 development agenda" — provides an opportunity to deepen the discussion already begun during the previous session with a view to establishing a common vision on the ways and means to strengthen our commitment and our actions for sustainable and inclusive growth. It is therefore our mission to work towards inclusive development for present and future generations, given the many challenges faced by our people, particularly in the areas of education, health, the fight against poverty and extreme poverty, energy, climate change and endemic poverty.

With that in mind, the Government of Senegal has resolutely moved towards a model whose goal is the creation of wealth and structural transformation of its economy. That is why we have adopted the Emerging Senegal Plan, which is, and for the next few years will be, the reference point for Senegal's economic and social policies. Emerging Senegal is backed by a progressive dynamic that is firmly oriented towards sustainable and inclusive development.

In the light of all of the above, we need to understand the importance of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, whose Steering Committee, led by the President of the Republic of Senegal, deserves to be further supported and promoted, given its goals relating to poverty eradication and infrastructure development

in Africa and the structural transformation of African economies.

At this very moment, as we consider the issue of sustainable development, the world continues to be confronted with terrorism and various crises and conflicts that are just as dangerous for international peace and security. The Sahel and West Africa are faced with recurring threats from terrorist groups whose criminal actions undermine the foundations of our society and hinder our development efforts. We are pleased by the Security Council's adoption yesterday of resolution 2178 (2014), a strong resolution against terrorism.

With regard to our subregion, our immediate neighbours in general and Guinea-Bissau in particular, Senegal would like to welcome the democratic process that led to the election of President José Mário Vaz. I urge the international community to support that fraternal country, with its enormous potential, including through a donors round table.

Similarly, the efforts of the international community to help stabilize the Central Africa region are hampered by the arduous process of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of the main militias and armed groups, while the Horn of Africa, on top of terrorism, is still severely affected by the scope of conflicts with disastrous humanitarian consequences.

Another part of Africa is suffering the effects of a scourge — rather, I should say a catastrophe — and that is the haemorrhagic fever caused by the Ebola virus. It certainly affects West Africa but is also a genuine threat to the entire world. We are pleased by the Security Council's adoption by consensus of resolution 2177 (2014), which was sponsored by 134 countries, including Senegal, and by the high-level meeting organized by the Secretary-General this very morning, which was a resounding success. The decision to establish the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response has reassured our country that the international community is aware of the scourge and that Ebola is not only an African matter but one that affects the entire world.

That is why Senegal calls on the international community to take swift action to provide the necessary support not only to the countries affected by the virus, but to those of the entire West African region exposed to the ravages of this epidemic. The sooner we take action, the better we can control the epidemic. As for Senegal, we have set up a secure humanitarian corridor as a sign of solidarity with the brotherly countries that have been struck by the disease.

Furthermore, concerning another important issue, that of Western Sahara, my country reaffirms its commitment to strengthening the historic fraternal ties among all of the countries of the Maghreb and Africa in general. With that in mind, all forms of separatism must be discouraged. In that regard, Senegal would like to reiterate its support to Morocco's initiative to grant broad autonomy to Western Sahara in the context of respect for its sovereignty and for the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, for the sake of durable peace in the region.

Faced with all of those pressing challenges, my delegation is convinced of the urgent need to establish a holistic approach that can enhance the resilience of countries facing recurrent crises and emerging new conflicts. From that perspective, a body such as the International Criminal Court (ICC) has, as part of its mandate, a significant role to play in re-establishing peace. Therefore, I would like to acknowledge here the distinctive honour recently bestowed on Senegal, via the person of Mr. Sidiki Kaba, Minister of Justice, who is the single African candidate standing in the election for the position of President of the Assembly of States Parties to the ICC, scheduled to take place in December.

In any event, Senegal remains committed to its irreversible path in favour of peace and international security. It will continue to provide, with commitment and determination, its contribution to peacekeeping operations, while stressing the deployment of high-quality personnel, whenever it is requested and within its capacities.

For a global solution to crises, we believe that in addition to policies addressing the issues, conditions must be conducive to restoring the economic capacities of countries affected by conflict. It is also urgent to strengthen cooperation and refine our prevention strategies to better cope with the escalating violence and new forms of conflict related to the spread of international terrorism.

The thorny issue of the Palestinian conflict comes to mind. In that connection, Senegal welcomes the ceasefire of recent months. In its capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Senegal reiterates its call to revive the peace process and put an end to the

blockade that has been suffocating Gaza since 2007. In this International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, Senegal renews its support for a just, peaceful and negotiated solution as the only option capable of ending the conflict and achieving the creation of a viable, independent Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side with Israel within secure, internationally recognized borders.

Paradoxically, the acuteness of the current crises is symptomatic of the status quo that continues to bog down the process of Security Council reform. I hope that the upcoming celebration of the seventieth anniversary of our common Organization in 2015 will mark the start of a reformed and renovated Security Council. Senegal commends the French initiative to suspend the right of the veto in cases of mass crimes.

Also during the Assembly's seventieth session, non-permanent members of the Security Council will be elected for the 2016-2017 term. As a candidate, Senegal wishes to request from this rostrum the support of all Member States for its election next year to a non-permanent seat on the Council, 25 years after its last term on the Council.

The meeting rose at 9.50 p.m.